THE GLORIOUS Epiphany, WITH THE DEVOUT CHRISTIANS LOVE to it.

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To the most Reverend Father in God WILLIAM *by Divine Providence, Lord Arch-bishop of* Canterbury, *Primate and Metropolitan of all* England, *and one of His Majesties most Honourable Privy-Council.*

HAving composed a Treatise, *Most Reverend Father*, concerning the Appearing of the Chief Shepherd of our Souls (whom we look for from Heaven at the last day) I know not to whom more properly to address it, than to your Grace: whom our Lord hath been pleased to intrust with the high Office of presiding in Chief over that part of his Flock which he hath gathered within the

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Fold of this Kingdom: A charge of which, as your Grace was not in the leaſt ambitious, ſo all judged you highly worthy: and may well look upon it as a token God hath ſtill ſome kindneſs for this Church (which hath been ſo long miſerably diſtracted, and torn in pieces by many ſects and different factions) that He hath been pleaſed to guide His Majeſty to the choice of a Perſon ſo rarely qualified, both with piety and prudence, with uprightneſs and inflexible vertue, as well as with Learning and other accompliſhments, to be the Prime Paſtor of it.

This I am ſure makes ſome Good men hope that He intends ſtill *to feed us in our green Paſtures, and to lead us forth beſide the waters of comfort:* and hath moved me to take the humble boldneſs (among the crowds who come upon that errand)

of

of appoaching your Grace in this manner; to congratulate to your Grace that ſingular honour, and to the Church that great happineſs.

For the continuance of which, as we ought to pray moſt ardently, ſo to do our duties faithfully in our ſeveral ſtations: and to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, wherewith in this Church, we are fed ſo conſtantly, and ſo abundantly repleniſhed. Unto which as nothing can more effectually excite us, than the ſerious contemplation of his appearing again to give Salvation to all the Faithful; and eſpecially to beſtow upon all Faithful Paſtors (who as St. *Peter* ſpeaks, feed his Flock willingly, and are examples to it) a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away: So I hope I have done ſomething in this Treatiſe to draw the thoughts and the affections of thoſe who

who piouſly peruſe it, to ſo lovely a ſpectacle.

Of this your Grace is ſo good a Judge, that it was a Principal motive to my confidence in this Dedication. For next to the pleaſure of compoſing ſuch a work, is the ſatisfaction of addreſſing it to a Patron no leſs Pious than Knowing: who hath accuſtomed himſelf to devout Meditations, and feels in his own breaſt the ſame holy motions, which he ſees and loves in another. This was a Reflection, wherewith that Great man St. *Hierom* was much delighted, when he was writing his Commentaries upon the Prophet *Iſaiah:* In whoſe words I may more fitly end this Preface to your Grace, than he begins one of his (upon the *ſixteenth* Book) unto *Euſtochium.* "It is an excellent ſentence of the "moſt eloquent Orator, that *Arts* "*would be happy, if none did judge* "*of*

" *of them but only Artiſts.* And leſt
" I ſhould ſeem to borrow an exam-
" ple only from Prophane Writers,
" this is the very thing which the
" *Prophet* repreſents in other words,
" *Bleſſed is he that ſpeaketh in the*
" *ears of them that hearken.*

They are the words, I find, of the Son of *Sirach*, xxv. *Eccluſ* 9. whom he calls a *Prophet* only in a large ſenſe (for in his famous *Prologus Galeatus* he ſtrikes this Book out of the Canon of the Scripture) becauſe he had an excellent faculty to compriſe in a few words many profitable inſtructions. Amongſt which St. *Hierom* ſeaſonably called this to mind (as he was writing upon the Scriptures, to one that loved them, and was well verſed in them) which is one of the *Ten* things there mentioned by that wiſe man, whereby he thought he might be made compleatly happy.

And

And of this happineſs (to ſpeak ſtill in the words of that Father) your Grace hath made us partakers: having a palate to taſte what is devout, as well as to diſcern what is learned and judicious. To the later I do not pretend; but hope there is ſomething of the former, which will recommend this work to your Graces good liking, and make it acceptable likewiſe to all thoſe that love our Lord Jeſus in ſincerity.

To whoſe powerful Protection and Guidance I moſt humbly commend your Grace; beſeeching Him to ſtrengthen you to ſuſtain the burden of ſo weighty a charge, and to inſpire you with all the Prudence, Reſolution and Zeal, which are neceſſary in theſe difficult times: that by your Graces wiſe conduct, Gods true Religion may be ſo ſetled and firmly eſtabliſhed among us, and ſincere piety, together with Chriſtian-

Learning

Learning and Knowledge ſo thrive and proſper every-where; that this Church (as St. *Paul* ſpeaks of that of *Theſſalonica*) may be *your joy and glory, and Crown of rejoycing, before our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at his coming.*

Which is and ſhall be the prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Graces moſt humble

and dutiful Servant,

Symon Patrick.

To

TO THE

Devout Readers.

SO adorable, as Tertullian *ſpeaks, is the fulneſs of the holy Scriptures, that the more we ſearch into them, the greater treaſures of Divine Wiſdom we diſcover there to imploy our meditations: and when we think we have found out all that belongs to one ſubject, new things preſent themſelves to fill us with greater joy and admiration. It is not long, ſince I ſent abroad ſo large a Treatiſe of that* Eternal Life *which Chriſt hath promiſed, that it ſeemed to comprehend all that the holy Books have delivered in that argument: But upon further thoughts I find, there is one moſt comfortable conſideration ſtill remains, which is the ſubject of this preſent Treatiſe. Wherein I have indeavoured to repreſent what a joy it will be to ſee our Lord himſelf come again from Heaven, attended with his holy Angels, to fetch us up thither to live with him for ever: and what*

what a Paſſion we ſhould now have for him, and for his coming; whereby we ſhould run to meet him, and receive beforehand ſome glimpſes of that glory, wherein he will appear, and we together with him.

The greatneſs of that Bliſs we ſhall then receive, ought no doubt to be the frequent ſubject of our ſerious Meditation. Which will be the greater (as I have ſaid in another place) becauſe we muſt ſtay ſo long for it, as till the day of Chriſts Appearing. And it is a ſingular comfort, we muſt confeſs, to know that it will be ſo exceeding Great: though that very thing cannot but make us the more deſirous, he would be pleaſed to haſten it. For whatſoever joy we ſhall have before that time (as no queſtion the Paradiſe into which our Lord entred immediately after his death, before he was crowned with glory and honour, was a place of very much happineſs) it will not be compleated till he come again to bring us that Great Salvation, which the Scripture ſpeaks of, at the Reſurrection of the dead.

When we are at reſt from our labours in the other world, I cannot but think we ſhall long for that happy day; and that it will

will be part of our joy to expect it, with perfect aſſurance of its coming. And therefore it cannot but be a very delightful entertainment, to think *of it, to* hope *and* wiſh *for it now, as the greateſt refreſhment we have of our labours, here in this life. For while our thoughts and deſires are thus imployed, we tread, if I may ſo ſpeak, upon the threſhold of Paradiſe, and begin to enter into the joy of our Lord.*

But there is one expreſſion of St. Paul, *which I mentioned in the concluſion of the ſecond* Advice to a Friend (*p.* 64.) *which excels all the reſt : for he makes it the proper mark of a Chriſtian to* LOVE his appearing. *Which I have undertaken therefore to explain in this Diſcourſe : that devout Chriſtians may know, what the Bleſſedneſs of that time will be ; and what the Affection is we ſhould have for it ; and what Reaſon there is, we ſhould be ſo affected towards it. The ſubject is ſo unuſual that I have not ſeen it any where handled ; which made me the more willing to ſet about it : that I might in part both ſatisfie the deſire I have to do all the honour and ſervice I am able to our Bleſſed Lord and Maſter Chriſt Jeſus ; and the delight*

delight I take in explaining his holy Scriptures. Of which to be ignorant, is to be ignorant of Christ himself, as St. Hierom's *words are, in the beginning of his first Book of Commentaries upon* Isaiah.

I do not expect indeed, nor is it possible, that you should have your minds alwayes possessed with such thoughts, and that your hearts should perpetually burst out into such passions, as I have here expressed: I my self cannot think them over again, nor any like them, whensoever I please. It is enough, (good Readers) and as much as we can reach, if you be thus affected at certain times, when your spirit is most serious and retired into it self; and if you indeavour to habituate your selves to such thoughts and desires, that they may be so familiar and natural, as to become easie and delightful, when you will stand most in need of them.

More particularly, when the days, wherein you live, are evil; or when you are under any private trouble; or when you would at any time retreat from the world and solace your self in angello cum libello, *in a nook with a Book (to speak with* Tho.

Tho. à Kempis, *who thought this the higheſt pleaſure upon earth) or when the Church calls upon you to ſequeſter your ſelf for devotion ; and eſpecially when old age you feel creeping upon you, and you think of drawing your ſelves by degrees out of this life : At all ſuch ſeaſons as theſe (and chiefly when you come near to your journeys end) this Proſpect cannot but be moſt pleaſant ; and ſuch aſpirations and ſighs after the day of Chriſts appearing, be the moſt raviſhing muſick ; and to be tranſported with ſuch ardent longings, as are here repreſented, make Afflictions light and eaſie, ſolitary retirements exceeding ſweet and delightful, old age cheerful, and death it ſelf very comfortable.*

But you muſt not imagine that Love *can arrive at its higheſt pitch preſently : nor muſt you be troubled or diſcouraged, becauſe you cannot inſtantly, or when you would, raiſe in your ſelves ſuch paſſionate longings after Chriſts appearing. Love is a thing that grows, and, as I may ſay, ſteals upon us by degrees ; and the paſſion we feel, at certain ſeaſons, diſpoſes us by little and little to be perfectly in love with that Good, which is ſet before us. A Good*

ſo great and ſo deſireable, that we do not follow our own beſt inclinations, if we uſe not our utmoſt indeavours to be ſo happy, as to behold that admirable Countenance *(to ſpeak in the language of St.* Chryſoſtom*) of our bleſſed Saviour the King of Glory.* "*For if (ſaith he*) when we* "*read the ſtory of his life, death and re-* "*ſurrection, we are ſo inflamed, that our* "*hearts burn within us, and we wiſh we* "*had lived in thoſe days when he was con-* "*verſant on earth, that we might have* "*heard his voice, and ſeen his face,* "*and kept his company, and touched him,* "*and miniſtred unto him: think with* "*your ſelves what it will be to ſee him,* "*not any longer in a mortal body, nor do-* "*ing humane things, but attended with* "*the hoſts of Angels, when we alſo our* "*ſelves ſhall be freed from this mortality,* "*and, beholding him, ſhall enjoy ſuch fe-* "*licity as exceeds all expreſſion.*

* Homil. penult. in S. Johan. p. 925.

"*Let us do all we can, I beſeech you,* "*that we may not miſs of ſo great a glory.* "*There is nothing too hard for us, if we* "*have a will to it: nothing too burden-* "*ſom, if our mind be not averſe from it.* "*For if we ſuffer, or endure, we ſhall alſo*

"*reign*

" *reign with him. And what is it to ſuf-*
" *fer? If we bear afflictions, if we endure*
" *perſecutions, if we walk in the narrow*
" *way; which to nature indeed is labori-*
" *ous, but to them who chuſe it and have*
" *a good will to it, is light and eaſie, by*
" *the hope of things to come.* For our
" light affliction which is but for a mo-
" ment, works for us a far more exceed-
" ing and eternal weight of glory; whilſt
" we look not at the things which are ſeen,
" but at thoſe which are not ſeen.

" *Let us lift up our eyes then from theſe*
" *things here, and direct them towards*
" *Heaven; let us imagine always theſe un-*
" *ſeen joyes, and look upon them. For if we*
" *be converſant with theſe things, we ſhall*
" *neither be inticed with the ſweet things*
" *of this world, nor ſink under the load of*
" *thoſe that are grievous to be born. But*
" *we ſhall laugh theſe, and all ſuch like, to*
" *ſcorn; and never ſuffer any thing either*
" *to depreſs us, or to puff us up: provided*
" *we ſtill ſtretch forth that deſire, and look*
" *towards that love. What did I ſay, that*
" *we ſhall not feel the evil things of this*
" *world to be grievous to us? More than*
" *that, we ſhall ſcarce mind them, or think*

 " *that*

" *that we ſee them. For ſuch is the nature*
" *of love, that it makes us imagine we ſee*
" *even thoſe who are abſent from us (but*
" *much deſired by us) every day with us.*
" Μεγάλη γὰρ τῆς ἀγάπης τύραννις *for great*
" *is the ſoveraign power, and, as we ſpeak,*
" *the tyranny of love. It neglects all things,*
" *and tyes the ſoul faſt to thoſe it loves.*
" *And therefore if we thus love Chriſt Je-*
" *ſus, all things here will ſeem but a ſha-*
" *dow, but an image, but a dream; and we*
" *alſo ſhall ſay,* Who ſhall ſeparate us
" from the love of Chriſt?

I pray God increaſe it, and make it abound more and more in all our hearts; that it may draw continually nearer towards its perfection: and make us likewiſe to abound in all the fruits of the ſpirit; which are the higheſt expreſſions of our love, and the beſt preparation for the day of Chriſts Appearing. For true Devotion doth not terminate in the heart: it goes further, and hath its effect in the life and actions. And eſpecially excites us to love, or charity towards all mankind, and above all to our Chriſtian Brethren; as that which bears the greateſt reſemblance to him whom we love. The Commandment which

St. Paul

St. Paul *charges* Timothy *to keep without ſpot, till our Lords appearing; was, for the moſt part, acts of Charity, as you will find briefly touched in this Book. And therefore theſe we ſhould labour to inliven by our Devotion; which is then truly Great, when it makes us ſo: and raiſes our ſpirits above all anger and peeviſhneſs, covetouſneſs and eager deſire of wealth, envy and vain ambition, evil ſurmiſes and jealouſies, fretfulneſs and impatience, with all thoſe other mean qualities, which are the enemies of Chriſtian Charity.*

Some Readers perhaps may think, that I ſtrain Devotion here unto too great an height; and may be apt, at the entrance, to lay this Book aſide, becauſe they imagine I have expreſſed that paſſion of love, which we ſhould indeavour after towards Chriſts appearing, beyond the truth: But I muſt intreat them, to do me the right and themſelves the kindneſs, to read on; and they will find in concluſion, the whole deſcription of it made good by the plain words of the holy Scriptures.

In the ſtudy of which if we did all conſcientiouſly imploy our ſelves, it is to be

hoped God would still preserve to us that inestimable Treasure: which contains such admirable φάρμακα τῆς ψυχῆς *(as the forenamed Father speaks) Medicines of the soul; both to cure our diseases, and to comfort and restore our tired or languishing spirits. For they are that* living water *our Lord speaks of; which whosoever drinks, hath in himself a* Well *or Fountain of comfort and perpetual refreshment,* springing up into everlasting life.

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xxij. Rev. 20.

COME LORD JESUS.

St. Chrysostom *Tom.* vj. *p.* 709.

Ἡ Καθολικὴ καὶ τελευταία Καθαίρεσις, εὐχῆς ἔργον ἐστὶν ἡμῖν.

IMPRIMATUR

Hic Liber cui titulus
The Glorious Epiphany, *&c.*

Geo. Thorp Reverendiſſimo in Chriſto Patri & D^no^, D^no^ *Gulielmo Archiep. Cantuar. à Sacris Domeſticis.*

April. 30.
1678.

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CHAP. I.

Containing an Introduction to the enſuing Diſcourſe.

WHEN we obſerve how the deſire of life is ſo deeply fixed in all mankind, both in old and young, in Kings and Beggars, in Wiſe men and Fools, that (as *Lactantius* * well noteth) they will endure any miſeries to preſerve and prolong it; we are led thereby to this Conſideration, That the higheſt and moſt perfect Good to which the ſoul of man aſpires, is a life without end, and without thoſe laborious toils and troubles which attend us here in this preſent world. We are naturally form'd to wiſh, that we may be ſo happy; and find no

* *Lib. III. Inſtit. C. 12.*

thought ſo ſad and diſmal as this, of being quite extinct, and never enjoying any more pleaſure after we are laid in our graves.

Upon which account it muſt be acknowledged that we are infinitely indebted to the Grace of God, who hath made that ſo ſure, which is ſo deſirable; and that our Bleſſed Saviour juſtly challenges our moſt ardent love and cheerful obedience, whoſe Religion is nothing elſe but an *acknowledgment of the Truth, which is after godlineſs, in hope of eternal life.* They are the words of St. *Paul* (*Tit.* i. 1, 2.) which import that the Goſpel is a Doctrine which teaches us to be pious, and promiſes to reward our piety with an happy immortality. This is the glorious hope of Chriſtians; whoſe Maſter Chriſt Jeſus (*who is our Hope*, 1 Tim. i. 1.) hath brought life and immortality to light; and made that which was but obſcurely delivered in times paſt, as clear and bright as the Sun at noonday.

There are ſo many *Witneſſes* of this, that their Teſtimonies have filled a large Volume. The FATHER, the WORD, the HOLY-GHOST, have all declared that

that *we have eternal life, and this life is in our Saviour, the Son of God.* So ſay the WATER alſo, the BLOOD and the SPIRIT: they all conſent in this Truth, That *Jeſus is alive from the dead, and lives for evermore; and becauſe he lives, we ſhall live alſo.*

Which welcome news filled the hearts of all thoſe who believed it, with exceſſive joy, even when they *were in heavineſs through manifold temptations*, 1 Pet. i. 6, 8. And why it ſhould not have the ſame effect on us, there is no other reaſon can be given, but becauſe we do not believe as they did. For they of whom S. *Peter* ſpeaks, had never ſeen our Lord when he was on earth, no more than we; nor had they any ſuch ſight of him, as S. *Stephen* and S. *Paul* had, after he went to Heaven; and yet believing, they *rejoyced with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.*

All our buſineſs therefore is, to ſettle this belief ſtedfaſtly in our minds. Which will have the greater power upon our hearts, when we conſider the abundant grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt towards us, and how excellent the Hope is which he hath given us. For he hath not only

assured us, that He hath all power in heaven and in earth; and that he will bestow the inestimable gift of immortality upon us: But that he himself will once more come from heaven to crown us with it. *We know* (as I have shown in two former Treatises) *that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true: and This is the true God and Eternal Life*, which he hath revealed to us. But besides this *first coming* to teach us the will of God, to dye for our sins, and to open to us the Kingdom of Heaven, after He had shown us the way to it; He hath bid us believe there is a *Second:* When He will come to judg us by those Laws which he hath left his Church, and to put the observers of them into the possession of that Heavenly Kingdom which He hath promised.

And there are none of the *Witnesses* who testifie that He is the King of Glory, but assure us of this also, that He will appear in that glory to take us up unto Himself. More especially the HOLY-GHOST, who (as *Epiphanius* * admirably speaks) is *the only Guide of Truth, the Expounder of holy Laws, the Inspirer of the*

* Μόνος ὁ ὁδηγὸς τῆς ἀληθείας, νόμων ἐξηγητὴς ἅγιος, &c. *Haeres.* LXXIV. n. 10.

the Spiritual (or Chriſtian) *Law, the Leader of the Prophets, the Teacher of the Apoſtles, the Luminary of the Evangelical Doctrines*; He made his Apoſtles and Evangeliſts clearly underſtand this to be our Saviour's meaning, and authorized them to proclaim this comfortable news to all Believers. Inſomuch that S. *Paul* triumphs in this, when he was ready to be offered for the ſervice of Chriſt, and the time of his departure was at hand, that there was *laid up for him a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord* (ſaith he) *the righteous Judg ſhall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing*, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

In the laſt part of which words there ſeems to me to be contained ſo much of the Chriſtian Hope, that they deſerve to be explained with the ſame care and labour that I have beſtowed upon the RECORD which the *Father*, the *Son*, the *Holy-Ghoſt*, and all the other *Witneſſes* have left us, to teſtifie that Jeſus is the Son of God, and that in Him we have Eternal Life. For as it tranſports all true Believers with joy, to read of a *Crown of Life*, a *Crown of Glory*, a *Crown*

of Righteouſneſs, which is laid up ſafe with our Lord in his Heavenly Sanctuary, as He himſelf and his Apoſtles in this and other places, confidently aſſure us: So it very much raiſes and encreaſes that joyful Hope, to know from their own mouths, that He who hath receiv'd and keeps it ſafely, will condeſcend ſo much as to appear again one day, to confer the very ſame felicity upon us, which He hath obtained himſelf; *who is crowned with glory and honour.*

Next to the belief of the truth of this report, there is nothing we are ſo much concerned to know, as who the perſons are that ſhall wear this Crown, and have their heads eternally honoured with it. Piety it ſelf, indeed, is very apt to perſwade thoſe in whom it lives, that the unfeigned practice of it, ſhall meet at laſt with ſome conſiderable recompence: But that it ſhall receive ſuch a Royal, ſuch a magnificent Reward, as deſerves the name of a Crown of Eternal Glory, is a thing which that great Modeſty and Humility (which is eſſential to true Piety, and its higheſt Ornament and Crown) forbids us to be too forward to conclude. A Perſon perhaps of ſuch eminence and luſtre as S. *Paul*

Paul (one of the Stars of the first Magnitude in our Saviour's right hand) may be advanced hereafter to shine in such Majesty : But that we dull heavy souls should be thought worthy of the like favour, none but a man so divinely illuminated, as He was by the power of the HOLY-GHOST, is sufficient to secure us.

And, blessed be God, we do not want such a Divine Testimony. For after this great Apostle had related what a course he had run, what agonies he had sustained, with what difficulties he had wrestled in the service of his blessed Master Jesus ; and that he nothing doubted but He would remember him at his coming again, and confer the honour on him which was laid up in Heaven for such victorious souls : He encourages all other Christians to comfort themselves with the same expectations, and not imagine they should lose the Crown (though they came far behind him in the holy race) if they did but LOVE THE APPEARING * of Christ Jesus.

That's the particular Mark and Character which he gives of the persons to whom this honour shall be done. For

* Ἀεὶ γὰρ ὁ λόγος ζῶν ὑπάρχων, καὶ τὸ ζῆν ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ ἔχων, καὶ ζωὴν τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀγαπῶσι δεδίς. Epiph. Haeres. LIV. n 5.

the underſtanding of which, and that we may the better comprehend both the happineſs it ſelf, and that pious affection we ought to have for it (which is the principal drift of this Diſcourſe), we are to make an enquiry into theſe *three* things.

Firſt, What may be conceived to be the meaning of this APPEARING of our Lord.

Secondly, What certainty there is of it. And,

Thirdly, What the LOVE is which they ſhould bear to it, who hope to enjoy the bleſſings of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Shewing what is meant by the APPEARING of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

IT is not hard to give an account of the firſt of theſe, if we carefully obſerve and examine the Words whereby the Holy Books expreſs it: And there are *Three* of them; every one of which ſignify, that our Bleſſed Lord (who now reigns in unſeen Glory) will once more appear viſibly to all Mankind.

1. The firſt is Παρουσία, which we render only his *Coming*; but it is a different word from that in our Creed, and in its proper ſignification denotes his *preſenting himſelf* to us, after he hath been thus long abſent from us. In the Creed we profeſs to believe that He is aſcended into Heaven ὅθεν μέλλει ἔρχεσθαι *from whence he ſhall come*, &c. But that we may know what kind of *Coming* we are to expect (and not imagine it is meerly by an inviſible power, as he *came* to deſtroy

ſtroy *Jeruſalem*), we are to mind how the Apoſtles ſpeak of it as a Παρουσία; and teach us to underſtand that word in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, concerning his perſonal appearance to us. Thus St. *Paul* diſcourſes to the *Corinthians*, 1. xv. 23. (where we firſt meet with this word in the Apoſtolical Writings) that every man ſhall ariſe from the dead, but in due order; *Chriſt the firſt-fruits; and then they that are Chriſts, at his coming:* in perſon that is, as the King and the Judg of the World. For ſo he preſently after directs us to expound the word (xvj. 17.) when he declares the joy he had by the Παρουσία *coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus*, who (as *Theodoret* there notes) were the perſons that brought the Letter to him from the Church of *Corinth*. In ſuch a manner he believed Chriſt would come; and that he and thoſe Chriſtians he had converted, appearing *before him*, it would prove the greateſt joy and honour to him, to be able to preſent to that great King, ſuch a number of perſons who had been perſwaded by his Miniſtry to become his Subjects, 1 *Theſ.* ij. 19. In ſhort, this is the word that is uſed in moſt other places,

ces, where we read of the *Coming* of Chriſt. And preſently after that laſt named (iij. 13.) he tells us, He will come attended *with all his Saints*; and therefore will perſonally appear, and ſhew himſelf in that Royal Majeſty wherein He now reigns.

2. Thus the ſecond Word ſtill more fully informs us, which is Αποκαλυψις, the REVELATION *of Jeſus Chriſt:* or his diſcovering himſelf again to the World, by coming out of that high and holy place where He now lives, but is not ſeen. So *Theophylact* expounds the word both upon 1 *Cor.* i. 7. and 2 *Theſſ.* i. 7. where he ſays, the Apoſtle calls the coming of Chriſt, by the name of his *Revelation*, to denote that though He be now with us, yet He is hid, and then ſhall be openly diſcovered. Which he borrows from S. *Chryſoſtome*, whoſe words * are theſe; * In 1 *Cor.* i. 7.

The Apoſtle indicates, that though He be not ſeen, yet He is, and is preſent even now; and then will appear, or ſhow himſelf viſibly to the world. *Oecumenius* alſo writes to the ſame effect; and we may ſtill further eſtabliſh this Truth, by conſidering another word of the ſame import with this (and therefore I ſhall not men-

mention it distinctly by it self) very much used by St. *John*, who exhorts his Disciples to abide in Christ, that when Φανερωθῇ *He shall be made manifest*, (or be shown to the world) we may not be ashamed *before him* at his coming, 1 *Joh.* ii. 28. So we translate the word in other places (though here it be rendred only *appear*), i. *Joh.* 31. iij. 21. especially in that remarkable place xxj. *Joh.* 1. where we read how he *shewed himself to them* at the Sea of *Tiberias*, and that this (*v.* 14.) was the third time that He *shewed* or *made himself manifest* to them, after that He was risen from the dead. In the very same visible manner will He once more appear; and be as really manifested to raise us from the dead, and to give us life, as He was *manifested in the flesh* at first (1 *Tim.* iij. 16), and again *shewed himself* after his Crucifixion, to be alive from the dead. For though our Life be now *hid with Christ in God*; yet when *Christ*, who is *our Life*, *shall appear*, or be manifested, *then shall we also appear with him in glory*, iij. Col. 4. Upon which words *Theophylact* hath this pertinent gloss, *At his second coming Christ shall be openly manifested, and showed to all*

all as God; though now he be ſo hid, that it is the thing which is objected againſt him, and a pretence for mens unbelief. And to the ſame purpoſe *Theodoret* bids us note, how exceeding appoſitely * the Apoſtle ſpeaks, when he ſaith, *Chriſt will then be manifeſted; who now is not ſeen by Chriſtians, nor ſo much as known by Infidels.* But then will let no man remain ignorant of him; becauſe every eye ſhall ſee him, and all men be forced to confeſs that He is the Lord of all.

* ἄγαν ἀκριβῶς εἴρηκε, &c.

3. For, *laſtly*, to make this ſtill more evident, it is called here (in the words I have undertaken to explain) and in many other places, his Ἐπιφάνεια APPEARING, in ſo clear and illuſtrious a manner, that St. *Paul* bids us look for it as *that bleſſed Hope* of Chriſtian people, far more ſplendid than any thing that hath yet been manifeſted. For it is *the glorious Appearing*, or the appearing of the glory *of the great God and our Saviour*, Ij. *Tit.* 13.

Which Epithete is to be carefully obſerved, becauſe it diſtinguiſhes this Appearing from a former; and teaches us how we are to conceive of it. For every body knows (who hath any skill in theſe things)

things) that there is, at leaſt, a double *Appearing* of Chriſt ſpoken of in the Holy Writings. One paſt, when he came and ſenſibly appeared, and was manifeſted in mortal fleſh, for theſe two ends, to preach the Goſpel, and to dye for our ſins. Let the *Reader* conſult the 1 *Tim.* i. 10. and ix. *Hebr.* 26. This is called the Appearing of Gods Grace (ij. *Tit.* 11.) which was ſo manifeſted at this time, that it eclipſed all former diſcoveries that had been made of it.

The other is yet to come; when the ſame Lord will as ſenſibly appear to reward men according to the entertainment they have given his Goſpel, and ſhow himſelf as a Royal Prieſt, who hath ſo perfectly expiated our ſins, and conquered all our Enemies, that He hath nothing then to do, but to give complete Salvation to his Servants. So you read ix. *Hebr.* 28. that to them who expect him, *He will appear the ſecond time* (ὀφθήσεται make himſelf be ſeen, appear viſibly) *without ſin, unto ſalvation.* As in the former coming He was ſeen in our fleſh, but appeared like a mean perſon, in the form of a ſervant: So in this He will perſonally appear in our Nature; but in

in greater ſplendour, in the form of a Prince; even as the Lord of all the World. And therefore in the firſt verſe of this Chapter (2 *Tim.* iv. 1.) *his* KINGDOM and *his* APPEARING, are both put together, as things Contemporary: And as before, there was an Appearance of his Grace; ſo hereafter he is ſaid to *appear in his Glory*, iij. *Col.* 4.

To theſe two *Appearings* ſome add a *Third*, in the middle between them; and that was His appearing to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*; and therewith the Perſecutors of his Diſciples: to whom, at that time, it muſt be acknowledged, He gave a mighty *Salvation*, or Deliverance. And the very Truth is, then He is ſaid in the Goſpel to come, xxj. *Joh.* 22. What if I will that he tarry ἕως ἔρχομαι *till I come*? And i. *Revel.* 7. ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται *Behold he cometh:* Nay, in a looſer ſenſe of the Word, that time is called by S. *Matthew* his παρουσία xxiv. 27, 37, 39. And by S. *Luke* the *Kingdom of God*, xxj. 31. (becauſe then He did exerciſe one part of his Royal Power in puniſhing offenders) But I do not find that in any place it is called the *Revelation*, or the *Appearing* of the Lord

Lord Jeſus. For He did not appear in perſon when he came to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, as He did at his firſt coming, and will at his next; but only virtually, in ſuch a deſolation, as made it apparent that His mighty Power was the Author of it.

There are two places I know alledged by a Great Man, which he thinks ſound this way, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. and 1 *Tim.* vj. 14. But it is far more agreeable to the coherence of thoſe places, to expound them of the *Appearing* we ſtill expect. Of which, we may look upon his coming to deſtroy his Crucifiers, and ſave his Servants, as an Emblem and as a Pledg. For it demonſtrated both the Power of our Lord Jeſus, and his Faithfulneſs to his word: aſſuring us, that He will one day crown the patience and conſtancy of all his Friends with Eternal Life, and puniſh the inſolence of his Enemies with everlaſting Fire.

However, it is paſt all doubt, that in this place I am treating of, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the laſt and greateſt appearing of our Saviour, to finiſh the work of our Redemption, and beſtow the Crown of Righteouſneſs, which is laid up in Heaven

Heaven for all that love him. Which part of our Chriſtian Faith, I have ſhewn, is to be underſtood in this manner: That our Lord will in perſon preſent himſelf once more to the World, and be ſeen at the laſt day to be what he is, the King of Angels and Men, and all Creatures. For as at his firſt coming into the World He *appeared* in our likeneſs (which the Ancients called his *Epiphany*, a name that ſtill ſticks to the laſt day of the Feaſt of his Nativity) and as He appeared in the ſame likeneſs when He roſe from the dead; and in that form and nature of a man went up into Heaven, and ſtill keeps it there, as ſeveral have ſeen ſince his Aſcenſion: ſo he will in like manner appear in the end of the world; only in greater Majeſty and Glory as becomes Him *who is over all, God bleſſed for ever, Amen*, ix. Rom. 5.

CHAP. III.

A further Illuſtration of the APPEARING of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

THERE is nothing to be added to what hath been ſaid, but only this: That the word *Epiphany* or APPEARING denotes not meerly the preſenting of himſelf in Perſon to the view of all the World; but the whole SHOW (as we call it) that will accompany his coming from Heaven, and all the things that ſhall be done by him, as the Lord and Judge of the World. He ſits now on the Throne of his Glory, and there ſhines in the ſplendor of the Divine Majeſty; and in that Majeſty will one day deſcend from thence into this Air: which the King of Heaven will never ſuffer his Son to do, without a moſt Royal and Glorious Attendance; ſutable to the quality of his Perſon, and to the dignity of his Office, which is to judge the quick and the dead.

This

This illuſtrious SHOW is deſcribed by our Apoſtle in the 1 *Theſ.* iv. 16. where he tells us that firſt of all, *He ſhall deſcend from Heaven,* ἐν κελεύσματι, *with a SHOUT.* That is, with great Acclamations, ſuch as uſe to be made when a mighty Conqueror appears and rides in Triumph. Thus we learn to underſtand it from xlvij. *Pſal.* 5. where *God* is ſaid to be *gone up with a SHOUT, the Lord with the ſound of a Trumpet.* That is, the Ark (which was the token of Gods Preſence among them) returned to Mount *Sion,* with great and joyful Ovations of all the people, after the conqueſt they got by the Divine aid over their powerful enemies. In ſuch a manner will our Saviour deſcend, as being about to compleat his Victories by conquering Death it ſelf, *the laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed.* For all the Heavenly Hoſts, we may well conceive, will be wonderfully pleaſed to ſee him go forth upon this deſign; and calling upon each other to perform to him the moſt cheerful ſervice upon that great day, will rejoyce to wait upon him in that moſt glorious Action, and triumph before-hand in the aſſured Victory which he will get over Hell and the Grave.

2. For then, ſaith the Apoſtle, will be *heard the voice of the Archangel*; that is, one of the chief Leaders and Commanders of the Cœleſtial Hoſts (MICHAEL, I ſuppoſe, the Protector of the Chriſtian Church) ſhall march before his Majeſty: calling aloud to all the reſt of that Heavenly company to follow after in their order.

3. And then will *the Trump of God ſound*; which the Apoſtle adds to ſignifie, after the manner of men, the powerful ſummons which will be iſſued forth to alarm all the World to attend at this great ſolemnity. For the gathering of the Congregation of *Iſrael* together was by the ſound of a Trumpet, as we find among other places, in iv. *Jer.* 5. *Blow ye the Trumpet in the land; cry, gather together, and ſay Aſſemble your ſelves.* To which the Apoſtle ſeems to allude, and calls it *the Trump of GOD*, to diſtinguiſh it from all other; and to expreſs ſuch a mighty and penetrating ſound as ſhall be heard every where: Such an one as is fit to precede none but GOD the Father Almighty himſelf, or Him that holds his place, his only begotten Son, when he comes to judge the World. In ſhort,

ſhort, this ſeems to be an expreſſion borrowed from the appearance of God at Mount * *Sinai*; whither all *Iſrael* being to be gathered together, they were ſummoned thither by Thunders and Lightnings and a thick cloud, and *the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud*, which made all the people tremble, xix. *Exod.* 16. So that the meaning of the Apoſtle is, that our Lord ſhall come as the Great King of the World in a moſt venerable Majeſty; which ſhall make all Mankind ſtand in awe of him, and tremble before him, as the *Iſraelites* did at the Appearance of the Divine Majeſty on Mount *Sinai*. And a great deal more. For,

* So *Theophylact* & other *Greek* Interpreters.

4. When he appears, it will be, as I have intimated already, with innumerable glittering troops of Angels (all clothed in very bright and ſhining Clouds) as his Guard or Retinue to attend upon him. So we are informed in ſeveral other places: *For the Son of Man* (ſaith our Lord himſelf, xvj. *Mat.* 27.) *ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his Angels, and then he ſhall reward every man according to his works.* Which Saint *Luke* expreſſes thus more fully, ix. *Luk.* 26. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of*

my words, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when He ſhall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy Angels. Some of which glorious Creatures appeared to the Apoſtles and told them as much, when they ſtood gazing after our Saviour, as He aſcended up into Heaven, i. *Act.* 11. *This ſame Jeſus,* ſay they, *which is taken up from you into Heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen Him go into Heaven.* Now he went thither in a moſt illuſtrious manner, in the bright Clouds of Heaven, attended by the Cœleſtial Miniſters; who came to conduct him into his Glory. For that is the meaning (it were eaſie to ſhew if this place were proper for it) of thoſe words a little before, *ver.* 9. *He was taken* (or lifted) *up, and a clond received him out of their ſight.*

In brief, He will appear as *the Lord of Hoſts*; *i.e.* of all the Armies of Heaven, whether Archangels, or Angels, Thrones, or Dominions, or Powers, or whatſoever other name there is whereby they are called.

5. And then making the Air his Camp, where he will pitch his Royal Pavilion, a *great White*, *i.e.* moſt Royal and ſhi-

ning

ning *Throne* will be ſet for Him, (*Revel.* xx. 11.) and leſſer Seats, it is likely, for all thoſe whom He intends to honour at that great day, 1 *Cor.* vj. 2, 3.

6. After which He will ſend forth his voice, his mighty voice, or moſt powerful and irreſiſtible word of Command; the efficacy of which will be ſuch that it will raiſe the dead out of their graves, and bring them before his Throne, or Judgment-ſeat. So He himſelf tells us in v. *Joh.* 28, 29. *The hour is coming in which ALL that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection of damnation.* Of which Authority and Power of his, He tells them (*ver.* 25.) they ſhould ſhortly have a proof: which was at the Reſurrection of *Lazarus*, when He did but ſay with a loud voice, *Lazarus come forth*, xj. Joh. 43. and immediately he that was dead (as it there follows, *v.* 44.) came forth, though bound hand and foot with grave-clothes.

In as eaſie a manner will He at the laſt day raiſe up all mankind; who being then gathered before him, and ſtanding

at his Tribunal, ſhall be judged and ſentenced by him, to receive every one according as their works have been, *Rev.* xx. 12, 13. 2 *Cor.* v. 10.

Some indeed ſhall riſe before others, (as St. *Paul* informs us in that 1 *Theſ.* iv. 16.) but ſuch ſhall be the concluſion of this Glorious Appearance; which as far as the Holy Scriptures (our only guide in thoſe matters) would direct me, I have briefly explained. For after he hath taken an exact ſurvey of mens actions, and made a juſt diſtinction of their perſons, in ſuch ſort as he himſelf hath told us, *Math.* xxv. 31, 32, 33, *&c.* (where all belonging to this judgment is ſummed up) he will crown the fidelity of his obedient Diſciples: and returning back from the Air (whither they will be caught up in glorious Clouds to meet him) he will carry them along with him to his Heavenly Palace; *And ſo*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *ſhall we be ever with the Lord*, 1 Theſ. iv. 17.

And who is there now that would not wiſh to behold him come in this Royal Majeſty; and put ſuch an happy end to all our labours and troubles here? What

ſoul

ſoul is there that can forbear to love and earneſtly deſire this glorious ſight, if it hope to reap advantage by it? This is that on which all good Chriſtians ſhould ſet their hearts. This they ſhould wait and long for, as the moſt lovely ſpectacle, that can bleſs their eyes, whenſoever it ſhall pleaſe God to let it appear. They may be tempted rather to be impatient, becauſe it is ſo long deferred; than to be cold in their affection towards it, or indifferent whether it come or no. Nothing can hinder it from raiſing the moſt ardent deſires to enjoy it, unleſs any doubt creep into our hearts, whether there will be ſuch a time as I have deſcribed. That diſtruſt indeed, if we have any, muſt firſt be removed. We ought to look after a good aſſurance of the certainty of that, which we make the object of our love, and moſt paſſionate expectations.

For if we expect a SHOW, that is only painted in our own fancies, in curious colours, but hath no real exiſtence any where elſe, what an amazing diſappointment will it be to find we have ſet our hearts on that which is not, and have embraced a Cloud inſtead of God? How miſerable

miſerable ſhould we feel our ſelves, if at laſt we perceived that we had preſſed a dream, and with long out-ſtretched arms (as I may ſpeak) moſt ardently claſpt about a ſhadow? Into what a gulph of ſhame ſhould we tumble, if we ſaw in the concluſion and iſſue of things, the whole weight of our ſouls and moſt hearty affections fall upon the thin air, and have nothing to ſupport them? Nothing can expreſs the confuſion it would throw us into, to find that we had courted, ſo many years or ages perhaps, a meer viſion of our own hearts; and let our affection looſe to wander in the paradiſe of fools.

That we may be out of fear therefore of any ſuch diſappointment; and have our affections powerfully excited towards ſo great a good, and be engaged moſt earneſtly to purſue it; I ſhall proceed to the *ſecond part* of this Diſcourſe, which is to ſhew the grounds we have to expect the APPEARING of the Lord Jeſus the ſecond time unto our eternal Salvation.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The certainty of this APPEARING of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

TO prove that there will certainly be ſuch an APPEARING of our Lord, as will ſurpaſs even the Glory wherein the Apoſtles ſaw him on the Holy Mount (which St. *Luke* plainly ſhews was a figure of it, ix. *Luk.* 26, 27, 28.) I might alledge all thoſe Arguments which aſſure us there will be a day wherein God will judge the World in righteouſneſs; and that the Lord Jeſus is ordained to be the Perſon by whom he will judge it. Which is as much as to ſay, that all thoſe Arguments which prove him to be *the Son of God*, might be employed to this purpoſe; for in that Name is included (as I have ſhewn in former Treatiſes) His power and authority to be the Judge of the World. This the *Father*, the *Word*, the *Holy Ghoſt*, and the other WITNESSES on Earth, as well as thoſe in Heaven, teſtifie to be an undoubted

doubted Truth; and therefore I might from every one of their mouths demonſtrate, that He ſhall appear again in ſuch a manner as I have deſcribed. For all Judges, much more the ſupreme Judge of all, ever aſcend their Tribunals in Robes of State, and royally attended; as thoſe that repreſent the Majeſty for whom they judge.

But it would be too tedious to follow that Method, and it is not needful I ſhould lead you ſo far about to bring you and this Truth together. There is one place in the writings of the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, which if well expounded and underſtood, will be ſufficient to perſwade us, we do not abuſe our ſelves with vain expectations of this *Appearing*. And therefore with the explication of that (which contains divers Arguments to eſtabliſh us in this belief) I ſhall content my ſelf, without having recourſe to every one of thoſe WITNESSES. And I ſhall the rather confine my ſelf to it, becauſe I ſhall illuſtrate a very conſiderable portion of Gods Holy Book (which upon all occaſions we ought to deſign to make perſpicuous) while I endeavour to give ſatisfactory reaſons, that our Lord Jeſus

Jeſus will appear again, and in ſo glorious a manner as hath been related.

It is in his former Epiſtle to this very Perſon, his beloved Son *Timothy*, Chap. vj. where he charges him (*v.* 13, 14.) to keep the Commandment he had given him without the leaſt violation of it, *until the APPEARING of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* That is, till his coming from Heaven, with all the glorious train of Angels to recompenſe men according to their works. Now that *Timothy* might be fully perſwaded there would be ſuch a bleſſed time, and to be more ready and cheerful in his obedience to this exhortation, the Apoſtle aſſures him that this is no ſuch ſpectacle as is formed meerly in the imagination: but which God the Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth will really exhibit in his time. So the words are (*v.* 15, 16.) *Which* (Appearing) *in his times He ſhall ſhew, who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath ſeen nor can ſee.*

Where we are firſt to obſerve well thoſe words which begin this deſcription of

of Him who will ſhew our Lord Chriſt in ſuch excellent Glory, ἰδίοις καιροῖς, *in his times* (we render it), or rather *in the proper ſeaſons* for it. That is, in the time or ſeaſon which God in his unſearchable Wiſdom hath appointed. From which phraſe *three* things offer themſelves to our conſideration.

Firſt, That the time, indeed, of this APPEARING is not revealed and made known to us. We muſt be content to be ignorant of it; for it is kept as a ſecret in his own breaſt, and it becomes not us to determine the ſeaſon which he hath reſerved to himſelf. Some great men, it is true, have adventured upon it; and Saint *Hilary*, * for inſtance, hath delivered his opinion, that the Transfiguration of our Lord, *Six days after he had ſpoken of his coming in his Kingdom* (xvij. Mat. 1.) prefigured the *Honour of the Cæleſtial Kingdom*, (as his words are) after the World had continued ſix thouſand years. But this and the current fancy among many in ancient times, that becauſe the World was ſix days in making it ſhould laſt juſt ſix thouſand years, had no better foundation than thoſe miſapplied words of St. *Peter* 2. iij. 8. *That one day with*

* Canon xvij. in *Matth.*

with the Lord is as a thouſand years. And therefore it is deſervedly cenſured by St. *Auguſtine* (upon xc. *Pſal.* 4.) as a preſumption reprehended by our Lord himſelf, when he told his Apoſtles, (i. *Act.* 7.) *It is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power.* And yet there have been thoſe who would needs be medling and conclude this from no better reaſon than the Tranſlation of *Enoch*, who was the ſeventh from *Adam*. And there is one of great note in theſe later times (to name no more) who hath been ſo bold as from a ſlighter ground to conjecture the time of the Coming of our Lord. Who having ſaid in iv. *Luk.* 19. that according to *Iſaiah*'s Prophecy he was come *to preach the acceptable year of the Lord*, or to proclaim a *Jubilee* to the World, *Cuſanus* thence concluded that for every year of our Saviours life, the Church ſhould continue a Jubilee, that is fifty years. And therefore he riſing again in the 34*th.* year of his Age, the Church ſhould have its bleſſed Reſurrection when the 34*th.* Jubilee was paſt: That is, after the year 1700. before the year 1734. which he endeavours to make more probable from the

the ſimilitude of the flood, which our Saviour, he obſerves, uſes when he ſpeaks of his coming: Fancying that as from the firſt *Adam* to the deſtruction of the World by water, there paſſed according to *Philo* juſt 34. Jubilees; ſo there ſhall be the like number of years from the ſecond *Adam* to the conſumption of it by fire. There are ſeveral other little fancies whereby he ſtudies to ſtrengthen this conceit: But I ſhall not mention them, becauſe as St. *Auſtin* hath rightly pronounced again in another place, from that ſaying of our Saviour before mentioned, it is better to confeſs our Ignorance, than to profeſs a falſe knowledge. And this we have reaſon to think is no better, becauſe ſuch ſupputations of the times, as he ſpeaks, that we may know when will be the end of the World, and the coming of the Lord, ſeem to be nothing elſe but a deſire to know that which he himſelf hath ſaid, the Father hath reſerved only to himſelf. Which words our Saviour did not ſpeak, becauſe he was ignorant of the time about which the Apoſtles enquired, but (as *Oecumenius* well notes) becauſe it would contribute nothing to their ſalvation to be acquain-

Epiſt. LXXVIII.

quainted with it. And it is the office of an excellent Master to teach, μὴ ἃ βούλονται οἱ μαθηταὶ, &c. not what the Scholars desire, but what it is profitable for them to learn. This was the only reason he denied to satisfie them; for he himself knew very well the times and seasons, as the same Writer adds, because, *All that the Father hath is the Sons also.* Now,

We are to consider (in the *second* place) that God the Father hath determined and set down a time for this *appearing* of his Son Jesus, though he hath not thought fit to have us acquainted with it. It is not the less certain, because he hath not revealed when it will be; since he hath fore-appointed in his own secret counsel, a season proper for this business. This ought to give no small strength to our Faith and Hope; for we are wont always to make the surer account of a thing, and look for it the more confidently; when we know there is a time limited and prefixed for its performance.

The Apostle indeed supposes (which is the *third* thing) that many Ages might pass before this appointed time arrived; but yet it will not fail to come at last.

* καιροῖς, times. The Phraſe being in the Plural number*, ſeems naturally to denote a long time hence. And if we obſerve the uſe of the very ſame phraſe in another place of this Epiſtle, *Chap.* ij. *v.* 6. (where he ſaith our Saviour gave himſelf a ranſome for all; a teſtimony καιροῖς ἰδίοις, *in due ſeaſon*, as we there tranſlate it) we cannot well allow it any other meaning in this. For there it ſignifies that our Lord at laſt did give a moſt memorable teſtimony of the exceeding great Grace of God, though ſeveral Ages were paſſed by (ſince the firſt promiſe made of his coming) before he appeared in fleſh to die for us: And therefore here in all reaſon it muſt be conceived to denote the revolution of ſeveral Ages more, from that firſt coming of his till the ſecond Appearing in aſtoniſhing Glory; as *Oecumenius* juſtly calls it.

How many Ages we cannot tell; and ſome of thoſe who thought heretofore they could tell, committed ſo groſs an error in their account, that it hath taught poſterity to be more cautious in determining any thing about it. They I mean who fancied the World ſhould continue juſt ſix thouſand years, following the Com-

Computation of the *Greek* Tranſlators of the Bible, brought this period to an end many Ages ago. *Lactantius* for inſtance tells us (and it is above thirteen hundred years ſince he died) that *poſt breve tempus* *, after a ſhort time they expected the concluſion of all things. And although they varied in their account, and could not agree in the exact ſumme of the years that were ſtill to come, yet *Omnis expectatio non amplius, quàm ducentorum videtur annorum* *, in this they ſeemed all to conſent that they would not exceed two hundred years. But St. *Ambroſe* lived to confute theſe conjectures; and ſaith that according to his reckoning this period of ſix thouſand years was out in his days. And ſhould we follow the Computation of the *Hebrews*, perhaps we ſhould not come nearer to the mark if we ſtill depended on ſuch expectations: but after theſe ſix thouſand years are indeed expired, there may be a great number for any thing we know ſtill to come before the end of all things. Which notwithſtanding ſhould be no diſcouragement to us, as long as it is ſure and certain He will come: the time being ſet, and He who hath prefix-

* L. VII. Divin. Inſtit. C. 14.

* Ib. Cap. 25.

ed it being so qualified, that no doubt He will show our Saviour in all his Glory, ἐν τοῖς προσήκουσι, τοῖς ἀφωρισμένοις καιροῖς *, in the most convenient and peculiar season, which is set apart and destin'd for it. For as there was a fulness of time (iv. *Gal.* 4.) when it was resolved our Saviour should first appear, after they had waited many Ages for him: so there is no doubt the like time set for his last appearing, and the consummation of all things; though it may be long before it be fulfilled. He who so faithfully performed His promise of the one, will never fail us in the other; because He remains the same Almighty and Unchangeable Lord and Governour of all things; whose will none can resist, and whose purpose none can frustrate or divert, but it shall certainly ἐν καιροῖς ὀφειλομένοις, (as St. *Chrysostome* expounds it) in due season take effect.

* *Theophylact.* and *Oecumenius.*

And that is the chief thing I intend here to note; the description of the Person, who will exhibit and shew Christ Jesus again to the World in the most magnificent Glory; *viz.* God the Father Almighty. *Six* of whose Attributes or Properties are here mentioned by the Apostle

Apoſtle to confirm this Faith in *Timothy*, and to work it in us; that He will not fail in his times to bring our Saviour again out of his holy place, and make Him appear in ſuch a manner as they preached.

The grounds of their preaching it was that (firſt of all) our Saviour had made them a ſolemn promiſe before He left them, that He would return and take them up to the ſame place whither He was going, xiv. *Joh.* 2, 3. *I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto my ſelf, that where I am there you may be alſo.* And (2.) the Holy Angels likewiſe had added their Teſtimony ſince He went to Heaven, to the truth of this promiſe. For as they were looking after Him when they ſaw Him aſcend, two of them ſtood by them and ſaid, *This ſame Jeſus which you ſaw taken up into Heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him going into Heaven*, i. *Act.* 11. And (3.) after this the Holy Ghoſt came, which was the fulfilling of a promiſe ſomething like to this, xvi. *Joh.* 16. *A little while and ye ſhall ſee me, and again a little while and ye ſhall*

not ſee me, becauſe I go to my Father. This was the Deputy of our Saviour (as *Tertullian* ſpeaks) and the teſtimony of his Preſence; by whom he viſited them, and came again to ſee them (*v.* 22.) according to his word: And the other promiſes they concluded would be as certainly made good as this was. But (laſtly) St. *Paul* had a greater reaſon ſtill to preach this, becauſe he had received an expreſs warrant and command from our Lord Chriſt himſelf, ſince He went to the Throne of his Glory, to declare that He would come again in all that pomp and royal Majeſty which the Apoſtle deſcribes in 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 16, 17. For what he there delivers about this matter, He aſſures the *Theſſalonians* was ἐν λόγῳ Κυρίου, *by the word of the Lord.* Other things (as *Theophylact* notes) he ſpake by the Holy Ghoſt, but this he learnt from Chriſt Himſelf, and heard from his own mouth. Either when our Lord firſt appeared to him and gave him a Commiſſion to preach what he had ſeen; or at ſome other time when He further *appeared unto him,* (xxvi. *Act.* 16, 17, *&c.*) or elſe, as *Oecumenius* * conjectures, when he was caught up into the third Heavens, and into

* Ἴσως δὲ τοῦτο ἦν ὅτε τὸν ἁρπάσαν, &c.

into Paradiſe; where he heard many things which he was not permitted, or could not utter; though thus far he was able to inform us, that the glory wherein our Lord reigned would one day be viſibly revealed.

Now ſee upon what ſolid reaſons and ſure foundations the Apoſtle perſwades *Timothy* to believe that God the Father will perform this promiſe of our Lord and Saviour; whom it is apparent He ſent, and hath therefore highly exalted, becauſe he never ſaid nor did any thing but what He commanded Him.

I. Firſt, He tells him that there will no doubt be ſuch a glorious appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe He who will ſhew him in his ſplendor is ὁ Μακάριος, The *BLESSED One.* As much as to ſay, ſo full a Good, that He wants nothing at all to compleat and perfect his Happineſs. And therefore (1.) cannot be tempted out of any envy (with which none but penurious beings are capable to be infected) to deny us this exceeding great favour. But rather (2.) will be moved by his plenitude and his bountiful nature to communicate it to us, according to our

Saviours promiſe. Eſpecially (3.) ſince He hath already advanced him to the higheſt bliſs and happineſs; and can ſo eaſily without any damage to himſelf, make all others bleſſed, who are faithful to him. And (4.) is unchangeable alſo (which *Theodoret* * thinks is included in this word) both in his nature and in his purpoſe; becauſe being moſt bleſſed in himſelf, He cannot alter for any thing that is better.

* τὸ ἄτρεπτον ὄδοιξεν μακάριον ὀνομάσας, &c.

They that have but a little may be loth to give; and they who have any defect may be unwilling that any ſhould approach too nigh their Greatneſs: For wanting ſomething themſelves they may be beſt pleaſed when they ſee that others do ſo too; and they may find that convenience in breaking, which they could not have done in keeping their word. But He that wants nothing, nor is lyable to any diminution of what he hath (being in full perfect poſſeſſion of all happineſs, pleaſure and bliſs) can never be unwilling to impart good things to others; nor deſirous they ſhould be leſs happy, than their natures are capable to be; nor tempted to go back with his word, when he hath engaged himſelf to do them good.

good. No, rather quite contrary; He takes a pleaſure in filling others out of his exuberant goodneſs, and cannot be inclined to be more forward to make very gracious Promiſes than he is to make them good to thoſe who patiently expect the performance.

Thus we cannot but believe when we reflect upon his Bleſſedneſs. Eſpecially when we conſider withal that he is μόνος Δυνάςης, (which is the ſecond thing.)

II. *The only POTENTATE.* This ſignifies His abſolute Power, as the other did his good-will, to make ſuch a publick ſhow of Jeſus Chriſt, attended with the pomp of all the Heavenly Hoſt, to judg the World. Which power of his, is denoted by that word [*only*] to be independent, originally inherent in himſelf, and not derived from any other: for which cauſe there can be no defect in it, nor can it ever grow leſs than it is.

There are ſeveral other *Potentates*, it's true, both in Heaven and in Earth; but whatſoever power, might, or authority there is in them, it is derived intirely from him, as the ſource and fountain of it. They have nothing but what ſprings out of him, and holds of him; who the

Apo-

Apoſtle therefore pronounces hath the Empire or ſupream Authority over the World *alone* to himſelf; becauſe whatſoever others have, it is not natural but arbitrary and at pleaſure; his eſſential and of himſelf. It hath no higher cauſe, and therefore is inſeparable from him; and can never be either wholly deſtroyed, or in the leaſt impair'd and weakned. No, He continues always as He ever was, the Rock of our ſtrength, and of our Salvation: (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, lxij. *Pſal.*) on whom our Souls may build a moſt ſure hope; which ſtands on ſuch a bottom as no power whatſoever can ſhake. For He being ſo very great, ſo abſolute a *Potentate*, there wants nothing but his own will to the effecting any thing (even ſo great a thing as this, *the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*), and of that we are ſecured by the foregoing conſideration, that He is the *BLESSED*.

III. To which the Apoſtle further adds that He is *KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS*; whereby we are to underſtand the Dominion, which by His ſupream Power and Authority He exerciſes over the whole World, over Angels of higheſt degree, and Men of great-

greateſt rank, as well as over other inferior Creatures. They are all ſo much below him, and ſo perfectly ſubject to his pleaſure, that the ſtrongeſt and moſt mighty oppoſers that can be imagined, have no power to do any thing to hinder this glorious appearance. A force like that of the *Perſian*, *Aſſyrian*, and *Egyptian* Kings, (who were all wont to ſpeak in this lofty ſtile) is not ſo conſiderable to him as ſo many flyes would be to them: No, nor if we ſhould ſuppoſe a power that could claim a juſt title to the Government of the Univerſe; would it be able to withſtand the will of Him to whom alone this great Name of *KING of KINGS* doth properly appertain. Nay more than this, ſhould all the Hoſts of Heaven combine together in a confederacy to join with all the forces on Earth, aſſembled in one body under their ſeveral Princes and Chieftains, they could not by all their reſiſtance defeat his Decree which he hath paſſed for the Coming of our Lord.

And yet we are not to make any ſuch ſuppoſal, becauſe they all obey his Commandment, and are obedient to the voice of his Word. And as for thoſe Creatures (be they never ſuch Principalities and Powers

Powers in high places, vi. *Epheſ.* 12.) which will not now obey Him, they ſhall not be able at that time to gain-ſay his Soveraign will: But they ſhall attend, whether they will or no, upon this Royal Perſon, Chriſt Jeſus. The good Angels, thoſe Cœleſtial *Lords*, (whether Thrones or Dominions, or whatever other name of authority there is above) and all inferior Governours, the Gods upon Earth, (Emperours, Kings, Princes, and Judges of the World) together with thoſe evil Angels who are called *the Rulers of the darkneſs of this World*; they ſhall all appear either with or before our Saviour; according as the GREAT KING ſhall appoint, who hath promiſed to ſhow him; for He is the ſupream Lord and Ruler of them all.

IV. And ſuch a ſupereminent King (as the Apoſtle goes on) is He who ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY: that is, lives for ever to make good what he hath promiſed, which cannot be ſaid of any but of himſelf. Earthly Kings are as weak and mortal as their ſubjects: And ſo all their promiſes (though they intend never ſo ſeriouſly to perform them, and have power for the preſent to do it) may fail

 and

and come to nought, becauſe they themſelves may fail and return unto their duſt. And *in that very day*, ſaith the *Pſal.*cxlvi.4. *their thoughts periſh*; that is, all their deſigns, counſels and purpoſes, with all the promiſes and great hopes that depend upon them, die together with thoſe that made them. But that Great King, the Lord of Lords, who hath immortality, and who *only* hath it; that is, of Himſelf, and not from any ones gift and favour (being the Lord as I ſaid of Angels as well as of our ſpirits, which οὐκ ἴσχυσιν ἀθανασίαν, ἀλλὰ μεθέξουσιν αὐτῆς, &c. have not Immortality, but partake of it, by the grace of Him who alone by nature is immortal *) He I ſay may be confided in and relyed upon: Becauſe, He neither wanting power, nor being ſubject to death or alteration, none of his counſels and purpoſes can be defeated. No promiſe of His can fall to the ground in proceſs of time; becauſe He lives then in all ſucceeding Ages, as much as He did at that moment when He paſſed it.

* *Theophylact and Oecumenius.*

And beſides this, it is very conſiderable, that having Immortality of Himſelf, (which the Apoſtle means as I noted juſt now, when he ſaith He only hath it) He can grant this benefit to us, even to our Bodies,

Bodies, as he hath done to the Angels, and to our bleſſed Lord and Saviour. Who ſaith concerning himſelf, i. *Rev.* 18. *I am he that liveth and was dead*, (*i.e.* am alive from the dead) *and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen*; (*i.e.* there is nothing more certain) *and have the keys of hell and of death.* Power, that is, to open the graves of others, and promote them to Immortality with my ſelf.

And there is no reaſon to fear leſt our Saviour ſhould not come and appear to do this; though it may be a great way off, and many Centuries of years have paſſed ſince He gave us his word for it: Becauſe God the Father Almighty, the bleſſed and only Potentate, who authorized Him to make this promiſe, and hath ſince that raiſed him from the dead, is immortal, and hath an indefectible life in himſelf, of his own nature. His will, as I have ſaid, doth not alter, and his power cannot be impaired, or ſuffer any decay; and therefore He can and will continue and perpetuate the Kingdom He hath given to our bleſſed Mediator Chriſt Jeſus; and keep him in full power and authority till that great day: And when the fulneſs of time is come, bring

bring Him again upon the ſtage of the World (if I may ſo ſpeak) and ſhew Him openly as the great Lord of all; whom He hath honoured already with his own high title of KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS, xix. *Revel.* 16. All this is as eaſie for Him to do, as it was at firſt to raiſe him out of his grave, and then advance him to the Throne of his Glory; where he now ſits at the right hand of the Majeſty on high.

And there is the greater reaſon to believe that He will both perpetuate the Kingdom of Chriſt to the worlds end, and conclude it with the glorious exaltation of all his ſubjects, when he ſhall appear again; (it being no more difficult than it was to carry him to heaven) becauſe as the Apoſtle further notes:

V. HE DWELLS IN LIGHT INACCESSIBLE; which no man, that is, can enter into, or approach. This ſignifies the inconceivable brightneſs of the Divine Majeſty; both as to His Eſſence which cannot by us be comprehended; and as to the place where He more eminently manifeſts Himſelf in an amazing ſplendor. He is the Great King who lives above in the higheſt Heavens, as in His Palace; where

where he repreſents Himſelf in a Glory ſo ſhining and dazeling (called in Scripture his *Majeſty*) that it is not for ſuch as we (till there be a marvellous change wrought in us) to come nigh it.

Nor is it ſo beſeeming that He ſhould deſcend Himſelf from thence in that moſt Glorious MAJESTY to judg the World, and to transform all thoſe who ſhall be *accounted worthy to obtain that better world, and the reſurrection from the dead.* And therefore we may be confident our Bleſſed Saviour, who long ago was ordained to be the perſon, will, according to his word, come as His Commiſſioner to do it in his ſtead. It is not ſo agreeable to His ſtate and greatneſs (if I may ſo expreſs it) to come Himſelf out of His Orb of Light to fetch us to his houſe and dwelling-place: But ſince He hath appointed a day of recompences, we may be ſure He will ſend his Son in *the glory of the Father*, as he tells us, ix. *Luk.* 26. (that is, in a *Majeſty* like that I now ſpake of) *and in the glory of his holy Angels*, (who uſe to attend him) to meet us and conduct us ſafely thither.

Or we may conceive of this expreſſion, after this manner: GOD (the Father, that

that is, the Son and the Holy Ghoſt) is in that high and holy place, the Sanctuary above; into which no man hath yet entred, ſave only the great High-Prieſt of our Salvation, the Lord Jeſus. And yet GOD hath made us a promiſe by him, before He went to heaven, that we alſo ſhall live with Him, and be there where He is. From whence we may conclude, that this great High-Prieſt will certainly come in his Royal Majeſty, out of that place into which He is gone; *to bleſs us*, by bringing us to that region of Light and Glory, which He himſelf only as yet inherits; and which is not any way acceſſible, but only by his means. In whoſe power, we may be ſatisfied, it is to promote us thither, being in ſuch favour with the Divine Majeſty, and ſitting at His right hand: who *inhabits*, or poſſeſſes this glorious place, as His own proper *Dwelling*, and therefore can diſpoſe of a Manſion in it, to whom He pleaſes.

VI. And indeed the Apoſtle bids us remember, (which is the laſt thing) that *no man hath SEEN GOD, nor CAN SEE HIM*; is capable, that is, to be in his glorious preſence. Which ſignifies partly the ſame with the former; and alſo may

ſuggeſt among other things the faithfulneſs of Him, who hath promiſed to ſhow us this Appearing of Chriſt Jeſus; of GOD, that is, the Father Almighty. Who we ſee here plainly is the perſon of whom the Apoſtle hath, all this time, been ſpeaking (as St. *Ambroſe* and St. *Chryſoſtome* alſo, if his gloſs be well weighed, underſtand him) not of our Saviour: who hath been ſeen already and ſhall be ſeen again at his ſecond appearing. And you know, He hath promiſed to the *pure in heart* that they *ſhall SEE GOD*, v. *Mat.* 8. A favour which in this ſtate no man hath enjoyed or can enjoy, as St. *Paul* here tells us. It is not for ſuch as we to *ſee God*; and therefore there muſt be a time, when, according to his faithful promiſe, Chriſt Jeſus ſhall appear again; to change us, and put us in ſuch a condition, that He may bring us to that ſight of Him, which no man in this World can have.

Either we muſt remain for ever without the ſight of Him; (and then God would not be true, who hath ſaid by His Son that we ſhall ſee him) or we muſt be carried up from hence unto His heavenly Palace; and then our Lord muſt

muſt appear to fit us for it, and make us capable of ſuch a bleſſedneſs, and to tranſport us thither.

For how we ſhould otherways be conveyed to a place ſo much above us, but by the coming of our Lord, to lift us up, and promote us to it, we cannot underſtand: Since this is the way that He hath deſcribed; and our Lord Jeſus is to have the honour of doing all the good to his faithful ſervants, which GOD in his infinite goodneſs deſigns to beſtow upon them.

This I take to be intimated in theſe words [*Whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee*] which declare ſtill more fully than was ſaid before, the ſuper-eminent excellence and perfection of the Divine Nature, and the aſtoniſhing brightneſs of his Majeſty. Which, whilſt we are here, we cannot reach, or attain any conſiderable ſight of; and therefore Chriſt Jeſus, who hath promiſed we ſhall ſee Him, will appear again to fit us for converſation with Him.

And indeed, ſince God hath already fulfilled his promiſe of the firſt appearance of His Son; and ſent Him, born of a Woman, to bring the glad tydings of

Salvation to us (by which he did, in one ſenſe, make us *ſee God*; that is, underſtand His Mind, Counſels and Will, i. *Joh.* 18.): and ſince another promiſe likewiſe of his coming to deſtroy his Crucifiers (when *every eye*, he ſaith, *ſhould ſee him*, i. Rev. 8. that is, his power and glory at Gods right hand, ſhould be abundantly thereby manifeſted to the world) is punctually and exactly made good: What reaſon have we to doubt of the certainty of his other appearing, which is ſtill behind; when we ſhall behold him perſonally preſent with us, to bring us nearer into the very preſence of God?

We have the ſame word paſſed for it, which they had for the other: he hath the ſame Will, the ſame Power, the ſame Empire and Soveraign Dominion; And therefore why ſhould we not have the ſame confidence, and expect it with as much and full aſſurance, as Holy men in old times waited for the firſt Conſolation of *Iſrael*, or pious Chriſtians waited for deliverance from their Adverſaries?

There is ſo little cauſe that our Faith ſhould think it ſelf leſs aſſured than theirs, that we may rather look for this

ſecond

ſecond appearing of our Lord and Saviour, with much greater confidence than they could do for the firſt: Becauſe we have the advantage of ſeeing all thoſe old Prophecies which foretold his Manifeſtation in our fleſh, actually fulfilled; and the Lord hath ſhown ſince that, *how upright He is, and that there is no unrighteouſneſs in Him.* We may depend not only (as the Apoſtle hath here told us) upon His Goodneſs and perfect Happineſs, upon his Power, upon his abſolute Dominion over all Creatures whatſoever, upon his Immortality, upon his tranſcendent Glory and Majeſty, and upon his Faithfulneſs and Truth: but I may add, upon the evident Demonſtrations he hath already given in the moſt remarkable inſtances, that *His Mercies are ſure*; and that he *keepeth Truth for ever*, xiii. Acts 34. cxlvi. Pſal. 6.

For this Bleſſed and only Potentate, this King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath ſeen or can ſee, *hath done great things for us already, whereof we are glad.* He hath ſent his Son after good men had long expected Him;

He ſent Him to do for them more than they expected (1 *Cor.* ij. 9.); He raiſed him up out of his Grave, and made him Lord of all; He hath given him power to raiſe up us to eternal life (as appears by the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, which wrought in his Apoſtles, and enabled them to raiſe the dead, and do many other wonders); *His Judgments alſo have already been made manifeſt*; He hath in part avenged the blood of his ſervants, and the *Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt.* And therefore we may with a ſtedfaſt Faith look for another appearing of our Saviour, when he will come in perſon to exerciſe this power himſelf (wherewith we ſee he is inveſted) ſo far, as to *change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body* (which then he will ſhow to the world) *according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf,* iii. Phil. 20, 21.

Revel. vi. 10. xi. 15. xv. 4.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Containing the Uſe we ſhould make of what hath been delivered in the foregoing Chapter.

I Cannot think fit to paſs on to what I further intend, without ſome ſhort Reflexion upon ſo weighty a ſubject as this of which I have been treating. And therefore let us here pauſe a while, and conſider how mightily All this ſhould move us to worſhip and adore this Bleſſed Potentate God the Father Almighty; to acknowledge with the humbleſt ſubmiſſion, His Supreme Authority; to reverence, admire, and praiſe His moſt glorious Perfections, who hath given us ſuch a ſure ground of faith and hope in Him. For ſo S. *Paul* here concludes this incomparable deſcription of him—*to whom be honour and power everlaſting. Amen.*

Which is not ſaid to exclude the other two Perſons in the holy and undivided Trinity, from receiving our worſhip

and service (no more than the giving eternal glory to our Saviour in the next Epistle, 2 *Tim.* iv. 18. and in other places, takes it away from the Father), but only to remember us of a peculiar prerogative, which the Holy Scripture alway ascribes to the Father Almighty, of being the Fountain and Beginning of all*; to whom it properly and peculiarly belongs to show this appearing of Jesus Christ. And therefore the Apostle invites us, from the consideration of His most excellent Majesty and absolute Dominion, to acknowledge and confess Him, to acknowledge and praise Him; *First*, As worthy of all HONOUR, worship, veneration and service. Because (*Secondly*) He hath all POWER and authority over us and over all Creatures; an independent uncontroulable Power. And that (*Thirdly*) EVERLASTINGLY to be celebrated, not only by us, but by all that shall come after us to the worlds end. Nay, to be praised and magnified by Saints and Angels in Heaven to Eternal Ages.

To this we should every one of us, together with the Apostle, most heartily say AMEN: Let be so. We give our consent

* So *Epiphanius* observes, that the Scripture shows μίαν εἶναι τὴν πηγὴν τῶν πάντων ἀγαθῶν, τουτέστι τὸν Πατέρα· καθέξης δὲ τῆς πηγῆς ὢν μίαν πηγὴ ἐκ πηγῆς ὁ υἱός, &c. Hæres. LXIX. Num. 54. and *Nazianz.* Orat. xxix. p. 489, &c.

conſent unfeignedly to it; and wiſh from the bottom of our ſouls, that all men would honour and ſubmit unto this *bleſſed* and only *Potentate*, the *King of kings, and the Lord of lords.* What though No man ever ſaw him? Nay, what though No man can ſee Him? Yet Glory, Honour and Power is to be aſcribed to Him, becauſe we ſee his works of Wonder every where. The Heavens and the Earth declare the greatneſs of his glory; and from all things that we behold, we learn his rich Goodneſs, his infinite Power, his immortal Bliſs; and that He is ſuch a Potentate, as the greateſt Kings and Princes upon earth, nay the higheſt Thrones and Principalities in Heaven, ought to worſhip and obey with the greateſt reverence. And much more is this due from us, poor and inferior creatures: eſpecially ſince He hath ſhown Himſelf ſo gracious to us in our Saviour (the moſt excellent demonſtration of his bleſſed Nature and mighty Love) and hath promiſed He ſhall appear once more in greater glory than ever; and hath taught us to believe, by all the Notions we have of Him, that He will never fail to make that promiſe good.

And

And as we ought to Honour God the Father of all; ſo this naturally moves us (out of a particular obligation) to honour and obey our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the Perſon whom this Great Majeſty will ſhow in wonderful honour and glory at the great day.

This is the very reaſon (you muſt mark) wherewith the Apoſtle backs his Charge to *Timothy* to keep the Commandment he gave him, *without ſpot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, v. 14. becauſe the bleſſed and only Potentate will certainly, in his own time, ſhew the glory wherein He lives, by his appearing again in Royal Majeſty in the ſight of all the World. It concerns us therefore, as well as it did *Timothy*, to have an exceeding great regard to this moſt glorious Perſon, whom God will ſo highly honour; and to take care that we behave our ſelves ſo, as to be unreprovable at that day. We muſt obſerve His Commandments, that is, as exactly as we can; and endeavour to render our ſelves as a beautiful body, without any ſpot and blemiſh; and thereby be found acceptable in His ſight, at His appearing.

And if you would know what Commandments

mandments they were which He would have *Timothy*, in conſideration of this appearing of Chriſt, and the certainty thereof, to keep without ſpot; you need but look back to the *eleventh* and *twelfth* verſes, and there you may find them. *Follow after righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, meekneſs: Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art alſo called*, &c. "That is, Shun Covetouſneſs, and all "the vices that iſſue from it, ever ren- "dring to every man what is his due: "Have God always before thine eyes, "and put thy truſt and confidence in "him; Deceive no man that relies on "thy word; exerciſe mercy and charity "to all; ſuffer wrongs rather than do "them; and ſuffer them with a patient "humble mind; bridle anger, repreſs all "Cholerick motions; and uſe ſuch gen- "tleneſs to others, as thou wouldſt de- "ſire thy ſelf in the like caſes. And for "this end, contend earneſtly for the Chri- "ſtian faith; that is, ſuffer not thy faith "in Chriſt to be ſhaken, much leſs over- "thrown by any perſecution, pain, or "death it ſelf. As thou haſt begun to "ſhow thy ſelf a good Chriſtian, ſo con- tinue.

" tinue. Remember thy Calling and Pro-
" feſſion; and reſolve to quit all thou
" haſt, rather than fall ſhort of Eternal
" Life. And this I give thee in charge
" (*v.* 13.) as thou wilt anſwer it be-
" fore God, who raiſes even the dead;
" and before our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who
" conſtantly profeſſed the truth before
" *Pontius Pilate*; that thou keep theſe
" things inviolable, and endeavour to be
" found pure and holy when Chriſt ſhall
" appear again: As certainly He will;
" for we have his word for it, and God
" the bleſſed and only Potentate, the
" King of kings, and Lord of lords, *&c.*
" is able, and lives for ever to make it
" good.

Theſe two Uſes, you ſee, the Apoſtle plainly directs us to make of the Doctrine here delivered. And there is a *Third*, which he teaches us in the place I am now treating of; when he deſcribes all good Chriſtians who *keep the faith*, by the Name of thoſe who *LOVE this APPEARING* of Chriſt Jeſus.

All they who obſerve the Commandments of our Lord and Saviour with ſeriouſneſs and care, ought to ſet their

hearts

hearts upon this glorious appearing which they expect; as the moſt goodly ſight, the moſt bleſſed ſpectacle that eyes can behold. This is the very Character, you ſee, that St. *Paul* gives of the faithful; and ſo it hath ever ſince been eſteemed by all thoſe who underſtood our Religion. Which diſpoſes and inclines all thoſe that heartily embrace it, and live according to it, to have a great affection for that happy day, which ſo many pious ſouls, through ſo many Ages, have moſt paſſionately longed to ſee. So *Andreas Cæſarienſis* hath moſt excellently expreſſed the ſenſe of all right Chriſtians, when he ſets this down for the Contents of the laſt Chapter of the *Revelation* (according to the old diviſion*) Ὅπως ἡ Ἐκκλησία, καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ Πνεῦμα, &c. *How the Church, and that Spirit which is in it, wiſhes for and deſires the glorious appearing of Chriſt.* Which will bring with it ſo tranſcendent a bliſs, that they have little faith or little goodneſs, who do not only wait for it, but rejoyce in hope of it before it come. For when the Apoſtle calls this appearing of Chriſt his Revelation (ſaith an ancient Writer in *Oecumenius**) διδωσιν αὐτοῖς μέγιστα προσδοκᾶν,

* Chap. lxxii.

* In 2 Theſſ. i. 7.

δοκᾶν, καὶ ἥδεσθαι, &c. *He bids them look for the greateſt things, and pleaſe themſelves in the very thoughts of his coming, before they receive the recompence of the reward.* For as his appearing will be infinitely affrighting to the wicked, and they have reaſon to dread it before-hand; ſo it will be no leſs comfortable to the godly, who ought now to entertain themſelves with delightful hopes of it, and fetch great contentment and conſolation from it; becauſe they ſhall then ſee and hear ſuch things as will raviſh their hearts with joy unconceivable.

That's the chiefeſt thing of all, and which is principally by me intended in theſe Papers. Unto which therefore, without any further evidence that might be produced of the certainty of this appearing, I ſhall apply my ſelf in the remaining *Third Part* of this Diſcourſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the means to excite that LOVE *in our hearts, which we ought to have for Chriſts* APPEARING.

I Have paſſed over the other two with the greater ſpeed, becauſe I intend to take the more pains in this; by endeavouring to ſhow, and to expreſs as lively as I can, what the LOVE is which we ſhould bear to this *Appearing*, if we hope to partake in the comforts of it. And how to do this better, than by deſcribing the original and progreſs of this paſſion, I cannot deviſe. And therefore I ſhall uſe that Method for the conveying this Appearing of Chriſt into your minds under ſuch a notion and character, as ſhall not fail to ſtir up in your heart the devouteſt affection for it.

I.

Let it then in the firſt place be remembred, that there cannot be the leaſt beginning

ginning of this love, unleſs we look upon the appearing of our Saviour as a GOOD, and that of the greateſt *ſize*. For elſe it will be ſo far from touching us with any inclinations towards it, that it will excite either our hatred, or our contempt of it. It is the *GOOD* which we diſcern in any thing, that charms our ſouls, and attracts our deſires. Though an object be never ſo near us, and preſent it ſelf to our very hands, and would thruſt it ſelf upon us; yet if we ſee no good in it, we either hate it for diſturbing our quiet, or at leaſt are perfectly cold to it, as feeling no power it hath to ſtir up any paſſion for it. Nay, though we do perceive a thing to be good for us, and deſirable to be enjoyed; yet if it ſtand at ſuch a great diſtance, and ſeem ſo very far off, as the *Appearing* of Jeſus Chriſt for any thing we know may be, it will not ſenſibly affect our hearts, nor move us to bear much regard to it, unleſs it have the face of a very great happineſs, and promiſe us exceeding much contentment.

This *Appearing* therefore of our Lord, is called by this Apoſtle in another place, ii. *Tit.* 13. *that* BLESSED HOPE; to expreſs

expreſs the incomparable happineſs and bliſs, which it will bring along with it. He would have us look upon it as a thing that far more imports us, than all our preſent enjoyments, or all that is poſſible to be here enjoyed. For there is nothing in this world that is worthy to be ſpoken of with ſuch an Emphaſis, as to be called *that bleſſed thing*, that happy poſſeſſion. This is a peculiar reſpect, belonging only to the appearing of Chriſt, which is the ſumm of all a Chriſtians Hopes; and thoſe Hopes the great treaſure of his ſoul.

When we ſo eſteem it and look upon it with ſuch a regard, as it is preſented to us in the glaſs of Gods Word; immediately we ſhall feel our hearts begin to draw towards it. This is the firſt buſineſs of a devout Chriſtian, who would *love* the appearing of his Saviour, to perſwade his heart to have a reſpect to it, far above all other things. That bleſſed day, all pious hearts who have any hope of his favour, ſhould think of and look for as the brighteſt that ever ſhone. The Coronation of a King, the Triumph of a Conquerour, the publick applauſe in the *Olympick* Games, the moſt famous Showes

that have ever been, or can be made, are all (they must remember) but as so many little Puppet-plays, in comparison with that grand spectacle. When all the world shall be in a gaze, when Angels as well as men shall wonder and admire; when the Sun shall blush to see it self outshone and overcome in brightness; when the hosts of blessed Spirits shall be the only Stars, and our great Lord the only Sun that appears in the firmament; when the righteous themselves shall shine in the same splendor, by the reflection of his rayes upon them.

Thus we must discourse with our selves continually, if we would be sensible of our happiness (as St. *Chrysostome* * advises those who would understand their high birth and nobility) "We must look "unto Heaven, to the very Throne, the "Royal Throne, for there sits, says He, "the first-Fruit of mankind. Who will "come again, will certainly come again, "leading all his Hosts along with Him: "the Legions of Angels, the several "Squadrons of Arch-Angels, the Socie-"ties of the Martyrs, the Quires of the "Righteous, the Tribes of the Prophets "and Apostles; and in the midst of these "im-

* Tom. V. Orat. 1. in Pentecost. p. 608.

" immaterial Camps, the King Himſelf " will appear ἀῤῥήτῳ τινὶ καὶ ἀφράστῳ δόξῃ, " in a certain unutterable and inexpreſſi- " ble glory.

O Dark Houſe, or cave of Earth (will every one who believes this heartily, be apt to ſay), How willingly would I leave thee; if I might be tranſported to meet our bleſſed Lord thus royally incamped in the air! O poor world! How come I ſo far to value thee, as to ſuffer thee to captivate this heart? How glad ſhould I rather be to ſee thee no more; if I might but behold him, whom my ſoul loveth, appear? Nay, it ought not to grieve me to ſee this earth, and all things in it in a flame; if that cæleſtial glory would but ſhow it ſelf. There is nothing here ſo dear, which I ſhould not chuſe to part withal moſt chearfully for the ſake of ſo great a Bleſſedneſs.

Come my Friends and my Relations (the deareſt goods in this world) let us ſet our hearts on this; and deſire to meet together with our Lord. Let our hearts be united in this love, as much as they are in all things elſe. There is nothing we enjoy of ſuch eſteem, but we ought to be content to ſee it

vaniſh and diſappear before that illuſtrious ſight. Happy will that time be which ſhall eclipſe all that beauty, which now preſents it ſelf unto us, with ſo much addreſs. Bleſſed will be the day that ſhall put out the luſter of the whole world; which now ſo ſtrangely dazzles our eyes. A great deal better will that moment be which ſhall diſſolve, if God think good, all our ſtately Palaces, than that which reared them and built them up.

Away, away you trifling Vanities. Why do you thus bewitch our eyes and inchant our ears, and draw aſide our thoughts with your flattering inticements? Trouble us no more you falſe or unſatisfying glories. But leave our minds free to think of that great and ſolemn day, when you muſt all be benighted; not by the want but by an exceſs of light and brightneſs.

Awake, awake, and open thine eyes upon us, O thou ſweet morning of our happineſs! Ariſe, ſhine forth, O thou Sun of Righteouſneſs, and make us bleſſed with a ſight of thy glory! Nay, it would content us more, than if we had all the world; if we might but ſee the clouds break; if we could but behold the ſhadows of the night beginning to haſte away; if thou, Lord, wouldſt but diſſipate

diſſipate theſe dark vapours that now incompaſs us, and cauſe the light of Divine Faith, as the day-ſtar to ſhine continually in our hearts.

II.

But hitherto we have only laid the foundation of *Love*. Which ſuppoſes moreover, that we have ſome ſympathy (as I may call it) with that which we apprehend to be ſo *Good* for us; and that we take our ſelves to be very much concerned in it. For there are ſome things that are excellent in themſelves; to which notwithſtanding we find little or no inclination; becauſe they are not ſutable to our diſpoſitions, neceſſities and deſires. The greateſt Perfections and merits oftimes meet with more Admirers than they do Vaſſals: and we ſee thoſe every day who bow other hearts to their ſervice, but find us inflexible to their attractions. As we have not an appetite to all ſorts of meats, even thoſe which we judge to be wholeſome and good; ſo we have not an inclination to all perſons and things, even thoſe which we hold to be well deſerving. We praiſe many things

which we do not love. We allow divers objects our approbation, which we cannot much affect. And that which in reason we needs muſt commend, yet doth not always command our hearts, and draw them to its embraces.

The Loadſtone, as is commonly obſerved, which draws Iron to it, finds Lead and Copper to have no perception of its touches: and that face, as I ſaid before, which bewitches ſome eyes, leaves others inſenſible of its beauty.

The *Love* then which we contract with any Good, ariſes from the convenience that is between us and it. We perceive an agreeableneſs in it, either to our needs or to our nature, and thence affection ſprings. The likeneſs and reſemblance that there is between two beings, is not the only cauſe of their readineſs to embrace each the other: but the correſpondence alſo and proportion which the one bears to the others neceſſities, is a ſufficient ground of it. A man that languiſhes under a dangerous ſickneſs, may conceive a great affection for an incomparable and very compaſſionate Phyſician, though there be no ſimilitude between them; becauſe he apprehends

that

that ſufficiency in him, which is able to ſupply the great defects and wants that are at preſent in himſelf. But when theſe two, *correſpondence* and *ſimilitude* (which ſeveral have ſuch power over the affections) ſhall both meet together in one thing; ſo that what we want is that to which by nature we incline; it cannot fail to produce a love exceeding all other, in intire union, ardency and perpetuity. For how can we refuſe to yield to that Good (or what would we have more than that) which our hearts feel at once, to bear a great reſemblance to them, and to anſwer all or moſt of their needs? a Good which is what we are, and what we would be too: a Good wherein we ſee the image of our ſelves, in that perfection to which we deſire to be advanced?

All they therefore who would be truly diſpoſed to love the appearing of our Lord, muſt have a deep apprehenſion of the meanneſs and vileneſs of this preſent ſtate. They muſt be poſſeſſed with a ſerious ſenſe of their many imperfections, and great weakneſs in the beſt condition that this world affords; of the poverty and emptineſs of all earthly enjoyments;

yea, and of the ſcantineſs and narrowneſs of all thoſe Divine participations which their Souls are here capable to be bleſſed withal. And then the Appearing of our Lord will ſeem a Good ſo ſuitable to them, that they cannot chuſe but have the ſame affection for it, that a crazy and diſeaſed perſon hath to the moſt skilful Phyſician. In hope that He will perfect their nature, cure the diſorders under which they labour, ſupply their defects, fill their appetites, nay enlarge their capacities, and raiſe them to a greater pitch of true goodneſs and bliſs.

Let us ſuppoſe ſuch perſons to be ſo much in the favour of God as to have a liberal ſhare even in the bleſſings of this World, as well as of thoſe which are more peculiarly in the gift of our Saviour Chriſt: yet it is impoſſible, one would think, they ſhould be ſo much pleaſed in the higheſt Dignities that can be conferred on them; in the rareſt Delicates that the bounty of Nature, or curioſity of Art can provide for them; in the ſociety of the choiceſt and deareſt Friends; or (I may add) in their own ſecret joy, though deſcending from heaven to them; as not to think ſtill that it is far more de-

 ſirable

ſirable to ſee the Lord Jeſus come to promote them and all their pious Relations and Friends to an incomparably better condition in his Cœleſtial Kingdom.

It is their intereſt to have Him appear again; and beſides, they have ſuch a likeneſs and reſemblance to Him, that the bent and inclination of their Souls cannot but make them long after the ſight of Him, as a good more delightful and agreeable than any other. For there is another Coming of Chriſt, before that which we expect, *Quo per totum tempus in Eccleſia ſua venit, &c.* (as St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks *) by which He comes, through all the time between his firſt appearing and the laſt, in His Church; that is his members, *particulatim atque paulatim*, working in every one of them by little and little; according to his promiſe, xiv. *Joh.* 21, 23. that if any man keep His Commandments, He will look upon it as ſuch a teſtimony of his love, that He will love that man, and the Father will love him; *and we will come* (ſaith He) *unto him, and make our abode with him.* Now when we heartily entertain Him, and He is ſo truly ſetled there, that we are made partakers of his Bleſſed nature and diſpoſition, and all

* L. xx. de Civ. Dei, Cap. v.

all the lineaments of Him (if I may ſo ſpeak) are drawn upon our hearts: We ſhall find them inclined to wiſh for the day, when he will compleat his work, and fill up the whole image of Himſelf, to the very life; and not only make us glad with the light of His countenance, but make us look perfectly like Him, and intirely aſſimilate us to His own moſt Bleſſed nature.

Do you not ſee how the holy Scriptures repreſent this Appearing of Jeſus as the moſt lovely of all other things; and therefore apt to draw our hearts with an irreſiſtible force towards it? It is expreſſed there, I obſerve, under the character of that which is wont to touch the Soul with ſuch an agreeable ſtroke, that it raviſhes it from it ſelf; I mean Beauty. For as that is nothing elſe, according to *Plato*, but the ſplendor and glittering of that which is good; ſo this appearing is ſet forth as exceeding bright, ſplendid and glorious, and as that which will make us ſo alſo: to the end we may be affected with it, as the moſt beautiful ſight that ever was. Read ij. *Tit.* 13. xiij. *Mat.* 43. And St. *Luke*, I told you before, mentions a threefold glory where-

in

in He will appear, *His own, His Fathers, and His holy Angels*, ix. 26. which is ſaid, I believe, to make this day appear the more illuſtrious and amiable in our eyes.

The only viſage of *Scipio*, we read, made him Maſter of ſome barbarous Nations; he piercing further into their hearts by his countenance, than by his ſword. And *Heliogabalus* as bad as he was, was no ſooner ſhown by his Mother to the Souldiers, but, from Prieſt of the *Sun* he became Emperour of the World. Why then ſhould not the beauty of that day, when the Prince of all the Kings of the Earth ſhall appear in the moſt glorious ſplendor, attended by the greateſt Principalities of Heaven, with all their ſhining Hoſts, in admirable order, captivate the hearts of all thoſe that love Him, ſince there is none ſo powerful, did they but *behold His glory* (as the Apoſtles did) and look upon Him *as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, to draw thoſe to his Religion who love Him not? How can they refuſe to yield to do Him homage, and ſuffer themſelves to be carried after Him as the Conquerour of all Souls; and above all deſire to wait upon Him

Him at his appearing; which they diſcern will be ſo glorious and render them ſo amiable, that they will become (as I doubt not to ſhow) a conſiderable addition to his Triumphs?

The hearts of all the faithful cannot chuſe but leap for joy, at the very thought of ſo great a Good, though widely diſtant from them; and wiſh it would come nearer to make them happy by its preſence with them. They are apt to ſigh and ſay, when they deeply ponder theſe things, with the Prophet *David*, in another caſe, ci. *Pſal.* 2.

O when wilt thou come unto me! It is a long time, O Lord, ſince thou didſt promiſe to come. We have waited for thee and for thy ſalvation, more than they that wait for the morning; I ſay, more than they that wait for the morning. May I not pray thee to haſten thy deſired coming? O when wilt thou diſplay thy ſelf, and ſhow thy glory more openly before us? O when wilt thou be pleaſed to impreſs thine own image more fairly on us? When ſhall thoſe little touches that we have received of thee, be perfected, and figured into a more exact reſemblance of thy beauty?

We

We cannot refrain, but we muſt long to have all our defects ſupplied out of thy fulneſs; to have all ſpots wiped off our ſouls, to be rendred clear as the Sun, free as the Air, and as unſtained as the pure influences of heaven. For how ſhould we think, O bleſſed Lord, that we bear any love to thee, if we can be content to remain (as we are) ſo much unlike thee? There is none can ſee thee, and not ardently love thee. There is none ever beheld thy face, that was not impatient to be conformed to thee. None have taſted thy ſweetneſs, who could be ſatisfied till they came to the fountain of it.

Therefore ſuffer us, Good Lord, to beg ſome more of thee, ſince thou haſt given us ſo much. Yea, ſuffer us to ask when thou wilt come and give us all, that ſo we may ask no more of thee. O how joyful will that time be, which ſhall make us ſo complete, that all our buſineſs will be to praiſe and thank thee! How comfortable will thy appearing be, which ſhall make us appear with thee?

O come, Dear Saviour, that we may come to thee. Come, that we may ſo come to thee, as to be for ever with thee.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Two further ſteps in this Love *of Chriſts appearing.*

III.

NOW when we feel our ſouls thus touched with any thing that ſeems very good and convenient for us; the firſt approaches of it beget a complacence in the heart, and give it a ſenſe of no ſmall joy and pleaſure. For when the Image, you may obſerve, of any good that imprinted it ſelf, is on the mind or imagination, it inſtantly endeavours to proceed further, and creeps into the heart, the will and affections; which cannot but turn themſelves towards it, to feel what this is which ſhows ſo fairly, and comes ſo kindly to ſalute them. Now when the heart thus looks about to ſee what it is that courts it; you ſhall find, if you mark it, that at the very firſt greeting it is entertained with a certain delight

delight and pleaſure; which this new-come gueſt brings along with it, to invite us to it.

For if you examine things ſtrictly, and with ſuch a curious eye, as ſome have done; you will perceive that this Image which imprints it ſelf upon us, is of the ſame nature with light or any ſhining body. It caſts, as I may ſay, its bright rays round about the ſoul; it diſperſes it ſelf, by a kind of illumination, into the will and affections, that they may be ſenſible how amiable it is: Which when they are, the Light is not more pleaſant to the eyes, than this is to the heart. It rejoyces in this good which preſents it ſelf to its enjoyment, as a man doth in the welcome approach of an ancient Friend; whom he is glad to ſee, but much more glad to feel in his arms.

And ſuch is the contentment that the belief of Chriſts appearing gives to all thoſe who fix their thoughts upon it. It chears and refreſhes their ſpirits. It ſmooths their minds, and makes them ſo calm and ſtill, that the *Halcyon* days are but fabulous ſhadows of that reſt and peace which then they feel in themſelves. Their heart is intirely delighted and ſatisfied with this

this belief. It is ſo tranſported beyond it ſelf with this comfortable perſwaſion, that it can eaſily overlook all other joys, when it lifts up it ſelf in the contemplation of this incomparable bleſſedneſs. No muſick can then be ſo ſweet to the ear, as the ſound of the trump of God. No beauty ſo fair to the eye, as that glory which ſhall be reveal'd. No company ſo inviting and welcome to the heart, as that great Aſſembly of Chriſt, with all his holy Angels.

And hearke, O my ſoul, do they not call upon thee to caſt a look that way, that thou may'ſt behold them in their ſurpaſſing glory. Liſten a while, and hear if they do not ſay, We are preparing our ſelves, and making ready to come for thee, and for all thoſe that love His appearing. O hearken again, my ſoul, what is it they ſay to thee? Turn thy ſelf about, and lift up thine eyes towards Heaven, that thou may'ſt know what it is that's promiſed to thee.

Will thy Lord indeed come again in power and great glory? Will He once more leave his heavenly place, and deſcend

ſcend to call us up to himſelf? Shall we ſee Him who loves us ſo much, and be transformed at the ſight of Him? O welcome news! When didſt thou meet with any tidings like to this? which ſheds ſuch a ſudden and tranſcendent joy and gladneſs abroad in thy heart, and prevents my forward thoughts, which were going to exhort thee to rejoyce? What hadſt thou loſt, if thou hadſt turned away thine eyes from this bliſsful ſight? How great an happineſs hadſt thou been deprived of, if thine heart had not opened, when the report of His coming knockt at its door?

But, O my ſoul, how ſweet then will this appearing it ſelf be, the hope of which is ſo delicious? How will that ſight intrance us, the news of which at this diſtance is ſo comfortable to us? Into what raptures will it caſt us, which now inſpires ſuch joy into our hearts? What a bright day will that be, which through all the clouds wherein we are wrapt, ſpreads round about us ſuch a cheerful light? If the repreſentation of our Lord in the holy Sacrament of His body and blood, and that but in His ſufferings and low eſtate, give ſuch ſatisfaction to the heart; What will the ſight of Himſelf

do to us, and that when he appears in his glorious Majeſty, as the Lord of Heaven and Earth?

O ſweet Jeſus, come, and let us ſee what that Majeſty and Glory is! come and draw aſide the veil, do away the ſhadows, and preſent thy ſelf as the King of Glory before our eyes. They have long looked for thee. They would gladly know what it is to behold thee in thy glory. O how gladly would they underſtand what the meaning is of thy coming in the Clouds of Heaven? *The brightneſs of them, we believe, is infinitely beyond all that eye ever ſaw. The thoughts of it revive our hearts, and make our faces ſhine. Our ſouls are drawn out, and run to meet thee, by the joy we have conceived at the promiſe of thy coming. Though we have not ſeen thee, yet we love thee; and though we now ſee thee not, yet believing* we rejoyce (*O that we could ſay*) with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

1 Pet. i. 8.

O bleſſed Lord, do not deny to compleat our joys, by haſtning thy coming to let us ſee thee. Come and fill our eyes, which cannot here be ſatisfied with ſeeing. Come and ſhew us thy glory; that we may ſay, it ſufficeth. *And let our hearts, in the mean time, rejoyce in nothing ſo much, as in the hope*

hope of thy glory. Let them always prefer this above their chiefeſt joy; and never wiſh for any thing with ſo much fervour, as for thy coming.

IV.

Now from this pleaſant ſenſe which is excited in us by the appearance of any Good to us, there naturally follows, not only a deſire but, a vehement motion, and as it were an effuſion of the heart, towards that which is ſo agreeable, and promiſes it ſo much ſatisfaction. Complacence, you muſt know, is but the beginning of love. For by that delicious pleaſure which the heart feels, when any good approaches, it is invited further; and even forced to pour forth it ſelf upon that fair thing which preſents it ſelf ſo ſweetly to it; and this is properly Love.

As ſoon as ever we diſcover any thing that is ſuitable to us, we feel our hearts inſtantly ſtruck with a ſecret joy, and are marvellouſly delighted in it. And this delectable touch is no ſooner perceived, but it ſweetly, yet ſtrongly draws us to go towards that thing, which at firſt ſight gave us ſuch a pleaſure; and

will yield, we hope, a far greater, when we approach so near it, as to get possession of it. Complacence or delight then, is but the first stirring or motion, which a good thing causes in our heart. This pleasing motion and agitation of the Spirits, is attended presently with a melting and as it were effusion of the heart; whereby we run out to meet that beloved object, and entertain it into our souls; and in this, as I said, properly consists the very being of Love. Which is so manifest in an heart duly affected towards the appearing of our blessed Lord; that there cannot be a greater proof of the truth of this description. For it feels so great a pleasure in the lively belief of his coming, that it is drawn thereby quite out of it self; and cannot chuse but resign up it self intirely to that glorious Prince, that He may make it appear together with Him. It easily dissolves in that heavenly warmth, and losing all its power to contain it self in its former bounds, flows to Him the Lord of Life, as to its proper place. It is lifted up towards heaven, and would fain be there where He is, from whom this pleasure comes. For with Him is the foun-

fountain of Life; and therefore where ſhould a devout ſoul ſet *its affections but on thoſe things which are above*, (as S. *Paul* ſpeaks, 3 *Col.* i. 3, 4.) where Chriſt *ſitteth at the right hand of God?* Which when they mightily affect the heart, it feels as if it were diſſolving, into that *life which is hid with Chriſt in God.*

That future life or bliſs is *ſafe* indeed, becauſe it is in the cuſtody of Chriſt, and in a glorious place where God dwells in light inacceſſible. But who can abſtain from deſiring, it ſhould be no longer *hid* and reſerved, but made manifeſt and ſhown, as it will be at the appearing of *Chriſt?* For ſo the Apoſtle adds immediately (as if He would anſwer their Queſtion who might ask when ſhall this *Life* be diſcovered?) *When Chriſt who is our Life* (*i. e.* the cauſe of it, who will give us this life) *ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with Him in glory.*

O what a joyful word is this! what ſhould hinder an heart, that is poſſeſſed with a full belief of it, from running thither with all ſpeed; whither it is called by ſo great a joy, as ſent from thence into it? Into whoſe arms ſhould it leap but only His, the expectation of

whose appearing creates that exultation? There is none in heaven it can desire but Him, with whom its life is hid; and whom is there on earth that it can desire besides Him?

Come, saith such a soul to it self, *and lift up thy head: Thy Lord I hear is coming; let us arise and go and meet Him. Let us leave this earth, and ascend up towards heaven; where He is, who is our Life. Let us raise up our dull thoughts thitherward; and fix our minds as oft as we can, on the glory that shall be revealed.*

Let us stir up our selves, and with the most ardent desires and affections of our heart, get as near Him as ever we are able. Let us go, O my Soul, and at least make a present of our very heart to Him; beseeching Him most earnestly to possess Himself intirely of it. Let us invite Him to prevent His appearing; and to come a little beforehand to manifest Himself unto us, and to take up His abode with us.

O blessed Jesus, let us say, who art our Life; be intreated to come hither (now that we cannot come up to thee) and live in us. Show thy self in this soul, and let not me

live

live any longer, but do thou live in me: let the life I live in the fleſh be by thy faith, O thou Son of God. Thou haſt loved me, and given thy ſelf for me: O love me ſo much (I again beſeech thee) as to live in me. I would begin that life which is hid with thee, in reſigning my ſelf to thee, that thy will may be done in me. Never did I feel ſuch complacence in following mine own, as I have ſince I was inclined to follow after thee; who wilt lead me, I ſee, to immortal glory.

Bleſſed be that day which made me ſenſible of ſuch happineſs. Bleſſed be the day which directed mine eyes to look for thy appearing. What can I wiſh for more than to be bleſſed with the ſight of it; and till it come, to have my heart always in love with it? I am going towards it by theſe deſires; and I will excite my ſelf to go the faſter, becauſe that bliſsful ſight is ſtill making nearer approaches.

What do we mean, my ſoul, to hang thus towards this earth? Why do we ſtay here when we ſee Jeſus preparing Himſelf to make another journey to us? Why do we not advance towards Him; as if we were deſirous to have Him come, and to let us ſee Him? Why do we not with all ſpeed

make our ſelves ready to receive Him? What is it that makes us ſo ſlow in our motions towards Him; *who when He appears will come as ſwift as the lightning unto us. Up, up, O my ſoul, let not thy Lord find thee, when He comes, poſting after theſe worldly vanities, purſuing of thy ſinful pleaſures; but onward in thy way, gone very far in devout affections, ardent deſires, and holy hopes, to meet His Glorious Majeſty.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The Progreſs of this Love to Chriſts Appearing in three *ſteps more.*

V.

AND yet this *Love* cannot content it ſelf with inward motions and aſpirations of the Soul towards the appearing of our Lord; but conſtantly excites all ſuch actions as are requiſite for the attaining of ſo great a Good. If we eſteem any thing highly, and feel it exceeding agreeable to our hearts deſire, we do not willingly reſt in the pleaſing paſſions it raiſes up in our hearts; but they carry us out in earneſt endeavours to be owners of it. And the influence it hath upon us is ſo powerful, and it doth ſo ſtrongly draw us after it; that it will not ſuffer any thing to put a ſtop to the current of our affections, when they are iſſuing out unto it.

There are certain imperfect motions in our hearts, which we are apt to call Love,

Love, that by no means deſerve that name; being only a good liking of that, which we do not yet truly love. They are called in the Schools, *Velleities*, wiſhes and wouldings, as we ſpeak; half a will which we feel for divers excellent things, but never come to any effect. The reaſon is, becauſe the appearance of ſome extream great difficulty, or the force of ſome contrary deſire, either holds the ſoul in her courſe (as ſhe is moving towards them) and beats her affections back again; or elſe turns the ſtream of them quite another way.

Love therefore is a generous vigour in the heart, which incites and ſtrengthens it to fair and noble actions, for the effecting its deſires; though oppoſed by never ſo many enemies. It is called by ſome the fire wherewith the ſoul is clothed, which forces its way through all reſiſtances. A certain ardor in us, which inſpires us to worthy though difficult undertakings. An Heroick paſſion, which makes us think nothing impoſſible, that is needful to be done, for the compaſſing the end at which it aims.

Thus then muſt our ſouls be carried, with ſuch ſtrong affections, towards the appear-

appearing of Chriſt, if we heartily love it. We muſt omit nothing that we know is required of us, for the obtaining the bleſſings which it will bring unto us. We muſt bid all things ſtand aſide that would impede us; and tell them they muſt pretend to no intereſt at all in us, when we are in purſuit of ſo great a good. The love of which will ſoon reconcile us to the hardeſt duties; and endear to us the moſt ſelf-denying courſes. It will alter the countenance of ſufferings, and make all the troubles of this life caſt a kinder aſpect on us. Nay, it will enable us to look death in the face with a cheerful heart. For it will preſent it to us in another ſhape; and make the Grave, that houſe of darkneſs, ſeem like the beautiful gate of the Temple of God.

Whatſoever our Lord declares to be his pleaſure, this will bid us do it; though we be undone by that means in all our temporal concerns. And when they tempt us to murmur and repine, to cry and lament at our parting with them: Love will bid us be of good comfort; becauſe this is the way to have a fair reception by our Lord, when He ſhall ſee we have quitted all for His ſake. We cannot indeed

deed keep them always if we would; yet ſuch is his love, our faith tells us, that if we conſent to forſake them beforehand upon his account, He will not ſuffer us to be loſers by it: And therefore our love both to Him and to our ſelves, prompts us not to ſtick at any thing which will be pleaſing to Him, though for the preſent it be harſh to us. It teaches us to reaſon as St. *Peter* doth, 2 *Pet.* iij. 11, 12. *Seeing all theſe things muſt be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs; Looking for and haſting unto the coming of the day of the Lord?*

What manner of perſons? Truly, ſuch as are preparing a room in their hearts for their Lord. Such as hope then to compleat their Eſpouſals to Chriſt. And therefore muſt *be holy and without blame before Him in love*, (1. *Epheſ.* 4.) and ſtudy nothing ſo much as to be found acceptable in his ſight (who is the Lord of their hearts, and their very life); and to be nobly entertained by Him, when He ſhall come again to receive His loving ſubjects up unto Himſelf. *We have our converſation in heaven* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *from whence we expect the Saviour, the Lord*

Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He can subdue all things unto Himself. For in all reason they that expect such a sight should fit themselves for it by a conversation suitable to the dignity to which they shall be then preferred. So *Oecumenius* I remember expounds these words of St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, when he answers the Question, *who is it that loves his appearing*, in this manner, ὁ ἄξια πράττων ἀμοιβῶν χρηστῶν, *He that doth things worthy of excellent recompences.*

Which if we love, it will not fail to raise us unto a heavenly life. If we wait for Him to come from Heaven, it will lift up our hearts,and carry them thither. We shall disburden them of all carnal affections, and throw off the load of the cares of this world, that we may be light and airy, ready to fly up above,when He calls us, to be with Him. We shall labour to cleanse and purifie our souls as He is pure; to adorn them with His Graces; and, in one word, *to put on the Lord Jesus*, that He may see Himself in us, when He comes.

And

And wilt thou come then, O bleſſed Saviour, (are ſuch ſouls apt to ſay) *may we confidently look for thee from Heaven to be our Saviour? Why do we queſtion it, ſince we have thy faithful word for it; who haſte promiſed that we ſhall ſee thee as thou art, and be for ever with thee? O aſtoniſhing love! what riches of grace is this? Was it not enough that thou condeſcendedſt once to come and ſave us; but that thou determineſt to come again? Canſt thou not ſatisfie thy love unleſs we be where thou art? And wilt thou leave thy ſeat in heaven to come and fetch us, rather than leave us here upon the earth?*

O Love, what is like unto thee? Thou haſt a mighty power! who can underſtand the wonders that thou doſt? O make it great in us, good Lord, as well as in thy ſelf. Cauſe it to do marvels in our hearts, as it hath done in thine. Let our ſouls be unſatisfied, till they come to thee. Call forth all their powers, as thou haſt done their deſires, that they may reſtleſſly move towards thee. Make them unwearied in well-doing, ſtedfaſt, unmovable, and abundant in thy work; that they may not miſs of thee.

O moſt

O moſt gracious Lord, ſuffer nothing in this world to diſcourage theſe hearts, that have wholly given themſelves to thee. Ceaſe not ſtill to excite and quicken them; ſince they have been already touched and awakned by thine Omnipotent love. But preſerve ſuch a flame alive in them, that they may ardently follow thee. Inſpire them with zealous reſolution, never to deſiſt in their purſuit of that bleſſed Hope thou haſt ſet before them. Strengthen them againſt all the power of their enemies; and let thy love burn with ſuch fervour in them, that none of the oppoſers of their holy deſires may be able to ſtand before it. Arm them, good Lord, with this invincible force of heavenly love, which may make them noble conquerors, and prepare them for thy glorious Triumph.

VI.

But true love cannot ſtay here neither; nor content it ſelf with ſome endeavours to enjoy that Good, which propounds it ſelf to its affections; for it ever tends to an *Union* with that lovely thing towards which it is moved. When the Soul runs forth to ſee what it

is that calls out its desires; the intention of that motion is, to possess it self of that amiable object; if it answer its first pretences, and prove such as it promised. No sooner doth any thing appear beautiful and lovely to the mind or imagination, but presently the heart sends messengers (as I may call the spirits that issue out of it) to bring it home, and conduct it to take up its lodging there. This is the meaning of that effusion of the Soul which I spoke of before; whereby it would dissolve it self into that which it loves, and be so mingled as to become perfectly one with it.

When an agreeable object, I told you, hath imprinted its image on the mind, it casts a certain light into the soul, and shines so comfortably on the affections, that they are powerfully warmed and excited by it. Now when the heart is full of this splendor, it doth not satisfie it self with those rays and emissions of light and heat, which are imparted to it; but strives to unite it self to the very center of it, and would feel the spring from whence such life and pleasure flows.

Just as Iron when it is impregnated with the vertue of the Loadstone, is not con-

contented with thoſe effluxes it hath received, but moves towards the body from which they ſtream; ſo is it with an heart which receives this joyful news from our Lord, that He will appear again in glory. It amuſes not it ſelf in thoſe delightful thoughts; it ſits not down in thoſe raviſhing joys; nor thinks it enough to be melted in the paſſion of love to Him, and to ſo great a bleſſedneſs: But it ſeeks to knit it ſelf to the very mind and ſpirit of Chriſt, that it may feel how bleſſed He intends to make it. It ſtudies, I mean, to be changed and transformed more and more into His likeneſs; and by an intire agreement of will with his will, to begin its transfiguration, and be prepared for a perfect and eternal union with Him.

It is not ſufficient to a heart that is in love with that great day, to live in a conſtant expectation of it (which is excited by the Revelation He hath made of it in his Goſpel, and is the light which he now ſends from heaven into us:) but it would gladly prevent, as I have already noted, that happy time; by feeling Him appear every day more gloriouſly there. It longs to ſhine more clearly in the light of his

heavenly knowledge; to burn more brightly in the ardors of his love; and by being more richly adorned with the Graces of His Spirit, to be recommended to all in the beauty of His Holineſs.

There is nothing can better explain all that hath been hitherto ſaid, than the example of the Loadſtone, which I juſt now mentioned. As ſoon as a piece of Iron feels the power of it, we ſee how it turns it ſelf towards it; and by its quivering declares the complacence and pleaſure (as we may call it) that it takes in its touches. Then we behold how it creeps a little towards it; ſtill advancing and bearing it ſelf more and more that way, till it come to join it ſelf with that thing, from whence it firſt received thoſe inclinations. Here you have all the parts of love, that have been already mentioned, moſt lively repreſented. Firſt, the mind apprehends, and is made ſenſible of ſome Good, which communicates an image or picture of it ſelf unto it. Then the heart is ſecretly ſurpriſed with a certain delight, by which the agreeableneſs of that image intices it from its ſelf. And then it moves towards it, and goes to ſee it. And at laſt, when it finds

it

it to be what it appeared, it flies, as I may say, into its embraces, and endeavours to knit it self so fast unto it, that they may never hereafter be divided.

And just such like is the temper of that soul, which heartily loves our Lords Appearing. Which it perceives to be a happiness so great, that it cannot be satisfied with any entertainment it finds in this world, but presses forward to the blessed sight of Him in all his glory. Nothing can quiet it, nor hinder its motion, till it become one spirit with Him. All that it hath as yet attained, all the wisdom wherewith it is filled, all the joys of piety which it sometime feels, are little and inconsiderable in comparison with what it desires to feel. And therefore on it proceeds in a serious study to be more like Him; out of a design never to cease its earnest endeavours, till it come to be for ever with Him.

O thou great and most Magnetick Good (should every pious heart say) *O thou sovereign attractive of all souls; I feel my self wonderfully touched by thee. Thou hast put my spirit, which was foolishly withdrawn*

after other things, in a ſetled motion unto thee. O what an inclination haſt thou awakned in my heart, to be with thee! Thou haſt mightily ſtirred all the powers of my ſoul, which is wholly turned about, to look moſt earneſtly towards thee.

O ceaſe not to ſhine perpetually into this cloudy mind, which is all in darkneſs without thee. Ceaſe not to invigorate this dull and ſluggiſh ſpirit, which is thus excited by thee. O ſpare not thoſe mighty effluxes of thy love; but draw me ſtill after thee. I cannot be willing to ſtand at any diſtance from thee; nor to ſtop my progreſs till I be cloſely united to thee. Therefore ſtill continue to make me feel thy power, till I be ſo happy as to move no more, but to reſt in thee.

Couldſt not thou be pleaſed, O bleſſed Lord, with any thing leſs than an union with ſuch ſinful fleſh, as this of ours is? would it not ſuffice thee to look down from heaven upon us, and ſhow us a glympſe of thy glory; but thou muſt come alſo and dwell among us; and make thy ſelf to be bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh, that we might be one with thee? How can I be contented then, only with looking up unto thee? How ſhould I be ſatisfied if I have

nothing

nothing more, but meerly ſome glances from thee? O my moſt gracious Lord, give me leave to imitate thy love. Suffer me to deſire and ſeek to become what thou art, by being perfectly transformed into thy likeneſs. And do not think it too great a preſumption, if I wiſh and long to be ſo united to thee, My Love, as to be for ever with thee.

Let me have the happineſs at leaſt to ſigh and mourn after thine Appearing. Affect my heart ſo ſenſibly with it, that I may groan in ſpirit (if I can do no better) for that bleſſed time, when I ſhall loſe the ſight of thy face no more, when I ſhall lye under the warm beams of the light of thy countenance; when I ſhall live in the very element of love; when I ſhall be ſo near thee, that I ſhall feel my ſelf to move in the very ſame Orb with thee, thou bright Sun of Righteouſneſs.

I ſeem now alas! to be a great way off from thee. I feel my ſelf like the cold earth, in the winter; which turns towards the Sun, and looks upon that glorious Light of Heaven, that great lover of all the world, but alas! is very far removed from its comfortable rays. O that I might be ſo happy as to approach nearer to thee! O that I

were fixed, and might never turn about any more from thee! Let the time come, that there ſhall be no more night, but a perpetual day with me. O haſten the time, when I my ſelf ſhall ſhine like the Sun, in thy Celeſtial glory.

VII.

Now in the mean time, till love come to a perfect union, as it is inceſſant in its motion, ſo it grows more vehement in its deſires and endeavours. For as frequent agitations make the fire burn more fiercely, ſo doth the ſtirring of this paſſion make it break out with a brighter flame. The deſire of union increaſes the ſwiftneſs of its motion; and the more ſpeed it makes, the nearer it is like to come to its deſired union. And, which is very conſiderable, the more earneſt and aſſiduous our motion is towards any Good, the greater hopes we have that we ſhall enjoy it; and the greater our hopes are, the more are we ſtill pricked on and ſpurred forward in the purſuit of that which we would fain enjoy.

A thing which is of exceeding great moment in this pious and devout love of Chri-

Chriſtian people. For without a *GOOD HOPE* (which St. *Paul* ſaith, our Lord, *who is our Hope*, hath given us, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 16. 1 *Tim.* i. 1.) our motion would ſlacken, if not be extinguiſhed. We ſhould have no heart to proſecute our deſign, but let it fall immediately; if it were not *in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye hath promiſed*, i. *Tit.* 2. As on the contrary by the help of this ſure and certain Hope, our diligence is doubled; and ſuch oyl poured on our wheels, as makes them move not only more eaſily, but with greater ſpeed and quickneſs alſo.

All the lovers therefore of Chriſts Appearing, are ſaid to *wait* for it, to *expect* it, and to *look* for the coming of *that bleſſed Hope*, as you ſhall ſee in the concluſion of this Argument, from thoſe well known places, iij. *Phil.* 20. ij. *Tit.* 13. and many other. And if you examine the holy Scriptures carefully, you ſhall find that this is comprehended in the *love* we ought to have for his Appearing; being ſuch a natural effect of love, that they are put indifferently the one for the other. As may be ſeen by comparing theſe two places together, 1 *Cor.* ij. 9.

with lxiv. *Isa.* 4. in the former of which the Apostle says, the things which surpass our conception, are prepared by God *for them that love him*; and in the other the Prophet saith, He hath prepared them *for him that waiteth for Him.*

Just as the people of *Israel* praying without the Sanctuary (in the Court to which they were confined) waited for the Priest when he should come from the Altar of Incense, or rather for the High-Priest on the day of Atonement to return from the most holy place and the Ark of the Covenant, to bestow the blessing on them: So do all good Souls, who are devoted sincerely to the service of Christ, while they remain in this outward Court, (the Earth wherein we dwell, which is at a great distance from the Heavens) look up to the holy place, where *Jesus the great High-Priest of our profession is*; and wait for the time when He will come forth to bless them, saying, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the beginning of the world.*

iij. Heb. 1. & iv. 15.

xxv. Mat. 34.

They cannot but frequently cast their eyes and turn their hearts that way, as the place of their Rest, which He is gone before

before to prepare for them. They are ever calling upon their Souls to *follow hard* after their dear Saviour, as *David* ſays (lxiij. *Pſal.* 8.) his heart did after the enjoyment of God in his Sanctuary. For this they ſeek, as he there ſpeaks, with thirſty deſires, *to ſee his power and his glory*, ſo as they have never yet ſeen him, nor can ſee him; no not in their neareſt approaches to him, while they live in theſe earthly tabernacles. They wiſh therefore He would come and bleſs them with a clear and full ſight of Him. After this their deſires grow daily more ardent; and they endeavour to ſtir up ſtronger and more affectionate motions towards ſo great an happineſs. They are apt to cry out, ſaying, *Draw us, and we will run after thee*; yea, we will fly; we will take the wings of an Eagle (in our paſſionate deſires) that we may mount up aloft, and get more and more above this world to be with thee.

And this gives them good Hopes likewiſe, that they ſhall be with Him; inſomuch that they cannnot but ſay:

O bleſſed Jeſus, thou haſt ſet our Souls into a longing for thee; and now they cannot

not ceaſe to deſire to come to thee. Thou haſt made us believe the moſt excellent ſurpaſſing glory, wherein thou ſhineſt; and ever ſince we cannot chuſe but look towards it, and wiſh to behold thee in that glory. If we be very earneſt for this ſight, if our

xlij. Pſal. 2. *Souls ſigh and ſay,* O when ſhall we come and appear before thee; *we do but return thine own breath, who haſt inſpired us with theſe deſires after thee.*

And may we not hope to come thither where thou art, when thou thy ſelf attracteſt our ſouls to thee? Wilt thou not ſatisfie thoſe longings, which not we, but thou haſt raiſed in our hearts? Give us leave to remember thee of what thou thy ſelf haſt ſaid, who didſt pronounce thoſe BLES-

xx. Joh. 29. *SED WHO HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET HAVE BELIEVED. O let it be unto thy ſervants according to thy word. For we are ſuch believers, as thou haſt bleſſed. We never ſaw thee, and yet believe*

xiij. Joh. 3. thou cameſt forth from God, and art gone to God; *and art moſt high in the*

ix. Rom. 5. *glory of the Father,* God bleſſed for evermore. *Do not our hearts cleave unto thee, though they have only heard of thee? Are not our eyes continually towards thee, though they have never yet beheld thee?*

Thou

Thou wilt not always ſure abſent thy ſelf; but turn our faith at laſt into a ſight of thee.

For what is the BLESSEDNESS *of which thou ſpakeſt, and haſt faithfully promiſed to ſuch believers? Is it not that they ſhall one day behold thy glorious face, and reign with thee in thy glory? Is it not that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf unto them here; and at laſt appear again to take them to thy ſelf, that they may live where thou art? O dear Saviour, as thou haſt made us to* BELIEVE *in this manner; ſo make us likewiſe thus* BLESSED. *As we have received thee, though we have not ſeen thee; ſo let this be the reward of our receiving thee, that we may ſee thee. We will hope thou wilt make us thus happy; as thou haſt made us thus faithful. We will expect till thou makeſt us ſee what thou haſt promiſed, as thou haſt made us do what thou haſt commanded. We will rejoyce in hope of thy glory; and do thou make our joy to be full: yea, bring us unto thee, and bid us enter into the joy of thee our Lord.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

This Love *to the* Appearing *of our Lord further described in* three *other fruits or marks of it.*

VIII.

AND now can any Soul chuſe but think of that perpetually, which it moſt dearly loves? Doth not every Good uſe to preſent it ſelf continually to the mind that is inamour'd of it, and remember us of its beauty? There is no queſtion to be made of it. The very ardency of our affection for it, doth more imprint and engrave it on our mind; and when, by any participation of it, we feel how good it is, we preſs it harder, and ſink it deeper into our hearts. There is no man, for inſtance, who hath ſetled his love upon an agreeable perſon, but He finds the image of that friend always before his eyes. It accompanies him every where, and cleaves inſeparably to his thoughts.

thoughts. It is a great part of his pleaſure to entertain himſelf with the ſhadow of that in which he hath lodg'd his heart.

And therefore if we love the appearing of our Lord, we ſhall ſolace our ſelves often with the kind. *In the multitude*, eſpecially or tumult *of our thoughts within us* (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks xciv. 19.) *the comforts of it will delight our ſouls.* We ſhall be daily calling upon them, and exhorting them to look towards it; and to fix their thoughts and affections upon it. We ſhall be inclin'd to ſay, as the voice is in the Song of Songs, *Come my fair one, come away.*

O my chiefeſt Good, what ſhall I deſire or wiſh for ſo much, as for thy coming? What is it that I ever ſaw, which ſhould detain my eyes from thy incomparable beauty? Or where can I expect to ſatisfie their hunger, but only with the filling ſight of thee, at thy appearing? The ſpacious Heavens hope to be filled with the Majeſty of thy Glory. The Sun is but a weak image of thy brightneſs, and will be content to go out to make room for thee when thou appeareſt.

reſt. All the Stars of light are ready to reſign their places, and leave the skie to be illuminated by thee alone. Whatſoever is lovely and ſurpriſes us with its beauty here, confeſſes it is but thy ſhadow, and that when thou breakeſt forth it muſt diſappear.

Fix my mind therefore upon thy glory; and let it henceforth imploy my buſie thoughts. Poſſeſs thy ſelf, O Lord of life and glory, intirely of this heart, which hath been too long eſtranged from thee. Impreſs ſuch a lively ſenſe of thee and of thy glory there; that I may ſooner forget my ſelf than thee and thy appearing. Make it my greateſt pleaſure to ſit hours and days and years, to think of thy ſo much deſired coming. When I meet with my deareſt Relations and Friends, let nothing entertain us with ſuch delight, as to think of being caught up together in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.

Let us love to ſpeak of the glory of thy Kingdom, and to talk of thy power: to utter abundantly the memory of thy great goodneſs, and to ſing of thy righteouſneſs. *Let us wiſh with united hearts* to ſee thy power and glory; *and to behold thee coming, according to thy faithful promiſe,*

out

out of thy heavenly Sanctuary. Let it be our ſweeteſt joy to inſpire each others hearts with theſe holy hopes; and to ſtir up one another to love and to good works. And when thou comeſt, O Lord, may every one of us be found ſo doing.

IX.

Theſe are ſome of the pantings of an heart, which loves and bears in mind the appearing of Chriſt. For to ſay the truth, Love is the original and ſource of all the paſſions that we feel in our hearts. They all flow from this as from their ſpring-head. They are but ſeveral motions which have their riſe from Love. Or, if you will ſo conceive it, nothing but different figures and ſhapes wherein it appears. It is love which fears, and love which grieves, and love which hopes, and love which rejoyces: there would be none of theſe, were it not for ſome good which we love; to which theſe and all the reſt of their kindred, owe their birth and nouriſhment. When this is hindred in its deſignes, it breeds anger, or impatience, or fear, or ſadneſs, or ſome ſuch like commotion: And when

when this ſucceeds and proſpers in the purſuance of its ends; there ariſes hope, and contentment, and joy and gladneſs, as the natural iſſue of it.

They that love then Chriſts appearing, will fear nothing ſo much as to loſe the bleſſedneſs which He will bring along with Him. Nothing will excite ſuch a diſpleaſure in their hearts, as that evil which would rob and defraud them of his favour at that happy day. And what is there that can give them ſuch a touch of ſadneſs, as the thought that they are ſo far diſtant from their Deareſt Lord? Or what can create ſuch joy, ſuch exultation of ſpirit, as to hope they ſhall one day ſee Him, ſo as never to part from Him any more? In one word, all the paſſions of their Souls will run this way, and be concern'd for nothing ſo highly as this, that they may be *preſented faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy.*

True indeed, O bleſſed Saviour, (doth ſuch an heart meditate in it ſelf) *I have had a thouſand fears in my breaſt. I have dreaded every ſmall danger in this world,*

as

as if it would prove my utter ruin. The terrors that have affrighted me, are as innumerable as the things I have fancied to be my happineſs. But now all theſe are willing to be gone, that they may make way for one greater fear; leſt I ſhould not enter with thee, when thou appeareſt, into thy reſt. O prevent ſo intolerable a miſchief! Whatſoever I loſe, I ſhall account my ſelf a gainer; if I loſe not the bleſſing which thou wilt give us. Take all if thou pleaſeſt, I am content; ſo thou wilt give me a ſhare in thy glory, when thou comeſt.

I have been too long peſtered with a world of ſenſual paſſions. Sometimes ſadneſs hath oppreſſed me; and then anger hath ſet me all on fire. Now vain joyes have ſwelled my heart and puffed me up; and again they have given place to grief, and ſorrow hath ſhrunk up my ſoul, and dried up my ſpirit. Fears and Hopes have toſſed me up and down, as in a tempeſtuous Sea. A ſmall matter hath created me much trouble; and I have longed for things, which promiſed much, but gave me little ſatisfaction. What a comfort is it, but to expect the day, which will ſettle and compoſe theſe tumults, in perpetual peace and quiet! I feel the thoughts of it already ap-

peaſing my ſpirit, and bringing a calm into my breaſt. And if the brightneſs of thy appearing did but always ſhine in my mind, it would diſpel all the clouds and ſcatter the darkneſs, wherein all this confuſion reigns. O let the ſplendor of that day irradiate my ſoul, even at this diſtance from it; and leave no ſpace void of its light and comfort. Yea, let it eclipſe all other joyes; and by its gliſtering beauty, cauſe the ſmall contentments of this world, to ſeem but as ſo many Glow-worms, which ſhine only in the night. I am ſenſible how ſhort the ſweeteſt enjoyments of this life are of that celeſtial happineſs. The ſociety of my Saviour and of the inhabitants above, O how much is it to be preferred, even before the delightful company of thoſe that moſt deſerve my love! Who can do me no greater ſervice, than by the innocent paſſion I have for them, to tranſport me with far greater, to that bleſſed country; where I ſhall enjoy them without fear, and love them without danger. And O that all the fears I at any time have of loſing the Deareſt Creature in this world, may preſently expire into a greater fear of being ſeparated from my Lord. Let all my hopes and joyes alſo about that, conclude in better hopes and joyful expecta-

tions

tions of living together in the joy of our Fathers houſe.

But as for other things, I diſcharge and renounce you, all you frivolous ſinful delights. I am not afraid of any evil that man, or other creature can do unto me; while my truſt and my joy is in the Lord. Come troubles, come reproaches, come loſs of Goods; I am not angry at it; ſo Jeſus will but come: and they will alſo excite me to faſten mine eyes more ſtedfaſtly on Him and his appearing. This is my hope, this is my joy, this is the ſupport and the ſatisfaction of my heart. This is the thing I am reſolved to entertain my thoughts withall: and if I may but have this, let all the reſt, O bleſſed Jeſus, be even as thou pleaſeſt.

X.

I have but one thing more to add, which is; that the Love which deſerves this Character, is a ſetled conſtant affection; an habit and temper of the ſoul which alwayes abides. Not a ſudden fit of paſſion; but a fixed inclination, and rooted diſpoſition to ſeek ſuch a good as it deſires. And ſo the word here uſed

by St. *Paul* ſignifies, not barely *they that love*, but *they that have loved* his appearing. For ἠγαπηκόσι being in the time perfectly paſt, denotes that this hath been the ſtedfaſt bent of their hearts to look for Chriſt, and prepare themſelves in this manner for his coming.

The Image of any lovely perſon, when it firſt preſents it ſelf before us, is wont to come in a poſture of humility and ſubmiſſion; and ſeems to crave to be admitted into our hearts. It invites us with ſo much ſweetneſs and reſpect; as if it would be beholden to us, for our kind acceptance of it into our favour. But when it is once paſſionately entertained, and hath poſſeſſed it ſelf of our hearts; we find it changes its behaviour, and grows ſo imperious, that it requires what before it ſeemed to intreat. It becomes abſolute maſter of our hearts; and placing it ſelf there as the Governor of all our affections, will no more be denied in any of its demands.

And ſuch is the progreſs of the love of Chriſt, and his appearing in pious ſouls. He comes and intreats us at the firſt, or rather beſeeches us that we would be ſo ſenſible of his kindneſs, as to let

Him

Him have a room in our hearts; and to receive from His hands ſo great a good, as He offers to bleſs us withall. We feel thereupon only ſome inclinations to Him, and good affections for Him; but do not come preſently to a full reſolution to ſurrender our ſelves intirely to Him. Nay it is too manifeſt, that we are off and on (as the phraſe is) and ſeem as if we could chooſe whether we will love Him or no. But when He hath once got within us, when we perceive how gracious the Lord is, and have opened our hearts to let Him dwell there; then He exerciſes an abſolute Empire over us. He will have none of His commands refuſed or diſputed. A ready and chearful compliance with His will, is the fruit of His Authority: and nothing can have a room there, but what ſhall ask Him leave. He rules and reigns over us in ſo ſoveraign a manner, that He carries us whither He pleaſes. And more than that, it pleaſes us to be ruled by Him; and it is the moſt perfect liberty, to be under the uncontroulable power of his Love. All the world cannot hinder Him from being obeyed; but every ſignification of his will and pleaſure to us, becomes a Law

as ſtrong as Fate, which cannot be reſiſted. Let him ask what he will, it is ſufficient that he is pleaſed; and that he loves us ſo much, as to think of appearing again to make us perfectly like himſelf.

That's a Good incomparably great, which needs nothing to procure our love to it, but only to be known: And when it is loved, needs nothing to ſecure it, but not to ſlip out of our mind. Or rather we cannot forget, what we have once ſo dearly loved. The pleaſures of that paſſion are its preſervation. Its activity and force, will not let it dye or fall aſleep.

O come, come, ſaith a ſoul poſſeſſed with this Love, *for I cannot wiſh for any thing like thy appearing. It is impoſſible I ſhould refrain from deſiring that joyful day. I cannot live, but I muſt long for thy coming. O when wilt thou come, my bleſſed Redeemer? when wilt thou come? when ſhall we ſee that welcome morn, that ſhall bring the news of thine approach? It cannot but be moſt welcome ſure to all thoſe that have waited for it with ſo much patience, and*

cryed

cryed out ſo often, make no long tarrying, O my Lord. *The brightneſs of thy face, I know, can throw no ſcorching flames into thoſe eyes that look for thee. That ſweet Sun will ariſe with a ſmiling countenance upon all ſuch hearts. They can never fear an evil day, when the Bridegroom comes, moſt glorioufly deckt, to compleat his love to them. And therefore I cannot but ſay again (and let all them that love thee, joyn their deſires with me, and ſay continually) come, come, O bleſſed Jeſus. Come, while our hearts are warm with love to thee. Come, while theſe paſſionate ſighs are calling for thee. Come, now that theſe ſouls ſtand open, with outſtretched arms to receive thee.*

What greater felicity can we wiſh, than to paſs away in ſuch aſpirations towards thee? What gentler or ſweeter breath, than theſe holy deſires, can waft our ſouls into the air to meet thee? Who can fancy any thing more deſireable, than to evaporate, all together, in ecſtaſies of devout affections to thee? Happy were it for us, if our hearts were ſcrued up to ſuch a pitch of love, that we needed no other inſtrument but that, to crack thoſe ſtrings that tye our ſouls to our bodyes. Happy were it for us, if in ſuch

a fiery chariot, we might be tranſported unto thy heavenly manſions. We can conceive no greater pleaſure than this, to expire in ſuch ardent flames into thy boſom, there to reſt for ever in thy love.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

All this ſhown to be the ſenſe of the Holy Scriptures.

THus have I put an end to the *third* enquiry about the nature of this *Love*, which St. *Paul* ſuppoſes good Chriſtians feel in their ſouls to the appearing of Chriſt. In ſatisfying of which, I have not followed mine own fancy, but the common ſentiments of all thoſe hearts, who have ſo much good nature, as to know what this paſſion means. And there hath been nothing ſaid, but what may be fully juſtified by the Holy Scriptures; if we diligently obſerve in what terms they ſpeak of the paſſion and fervent deſire, which all pious Believers have for the coming of our Lord.

I. For

I.

For which, they are, *first*, said to LOOK, or to *expect* it; with such a greedinesse as men do that, of which they are extreamly desirous. So those words Ἀποδέχεσθαι and Περιδέχεσθαι signifie, which are used in the 1 *Cor.* i. 7. iij. *Phil.* 20. ij. *Tit.* 13. ix. *Heb.* 28. where they are said to *look* for the Revelation of Jesus Christ; to have their conversation in Heaven, from whence they *look* for the Saviour; to be *looking* for that blessed Hope, the coming of Christ; who will appear the second time to them that *look* for him: with that earnestnes, that is, and concernment, which one hath for the greatest good in the world. Or with such a longing (as I have explained it before) as the children of *Israel* had to see their High-Priest return out of the most holy place; into which he went on the day of expiation, to make reconciliation for their sins. For if he came out alive, it was a token that God had accepted him; and with the greatest joy they received the blessing which then he brought and pronounced to them in his name.

There

There is a manifeſt alluſion to this, in the laſt of thoſe places now mentioned; *Heb.* ix. where the Apoſtle ſaith *verſ.* 26. that when Chriſt appeared in this world, it was *to put away ſin, by the ſacrifice of himſelf.* Which bloody ſacrifice, as you read, *verſ.* 24. He carried *not into the holy places made with hands (which were only figures of the true) but into Heaven it ſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us:* that is, by vertue of this Sacrifice to perfect the expiation of our ſins, and obtain for us the Divine Bleſſing. Now he being thus offered (verſ. 28.) *to bear the ſins of many* (as a publick Sacrifice, that is, for the whole body of mankind; not a particular, for one or a few perſons) *unto them that look for him, he ſhall appear* (viſibly) *the ſecond time without ſin* (as having made a complete expiation) to give *ſalvation* to his people, who expect his coming out of Heaven to bleſs them.

II.

Expect it did I ſay? yea, this Apoſtle calls it a moſt *earneſt expectation.* So the ἀποκαραδοκία *of the creature,* viij. *Rom.* 19. is

is expounded by *Oecumenius* * to be its exceeding intense and vehement desire and expectance of the revelation of the Sons of God; that is, sayes he, of the conclusion of all, when it shall be clearly seen who are the sons of God, and who the sons of the Devil. Which is a Good to be wisht for so much above all other, that the Heaven, the Earth, the Sea, the Air, the Sun, the Moon, all the visible Creation; together with all that is invisible, the Angels, Archangels, Powers, Principalities, Dominions; all these expect our perfection. They are the words of *Theodoret* who (with other of the Ancients) looks upon the whole Creation as brought in here, expecting our future happiness, by such a figure * as the Prophets use, when they introduce the Woods rejoycing, the Mountains leaping, the Floods clapping their hands; to express the exceeding great joy that should be among mankind at the first coming of our Lord. But because it is controverted what the Apostle means by *the Creature*, and this is not a fit place to discuss it, I shall pass by this expression; and not mention the *sighs* and the *groans*, which there follow, as the natural

* Ἐπιτεταμένη καὶ σφόδρα προσδοκία.

* Προσωποποιΐα δὲ ἐστι τὸ πᾶν. *Oecum.*

ral effect of an exceeding great deſire to ſee the day of redemption come.

III.

Let us rather conſider, that the glory which ſhall be revealed, at the coming of Chriſt out of this holy place to give ſalvation to his faithful worſhippers, is the cauſe, that, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks in this place (which I have taken for the riſe of this Diſcourſe) they look for it, as a thing that hath very ſtrongly engaged their hearts, and is the object of their deareſt affection. They declare by the fixing of their eyes upon it, how much they love it; that is, eſteem it, are inclined to it, and think long till they enjoy it. For whatſoever touches us ſo nearly, we are wont to expect it with ſome impatience.

IV.

But as the greatneſs of this Good is ſuch, as will make thoſe that believe it earneſtly long for it: ſo it is able to quiet and ſtill their ſouls by the mere hope of its enjoyment; though it ſtay long before it come. And therefore,

(4.) they

(4.) they are said to *WAIT for his Son from Heaven*, 1 *Thess.* i. 10. ἀναμένειν *to tarry*, to *stay* till he come. Which implies both longing and patient abiding till he please to send so great a Blessing.

V.

Nay, *fifthly*, St. *James* exhorts them to be PATIENT with long-suffering *to the coming of the Lord*, V. 7. For so the word μακροθυμήσατε, there used, imports; a patient abiding, though he stay long and we suffer much before he come. We could not suffer and indure what we must on some occasions, if we did not expect him: (as *Oecumenius* notes out of the ancient *Greek* Expositors*) And our sufferings would not be very valuable, if we were not content to expect him long, as he likewise observes upon another place in that Epistle. For if it were manifest, saith he, * that the *day of the Lord*, or the consummation of all things, would be within three years, and it could not be otherwise, all would despise dangers and make nothing of them: ὅπερ πολλὰ ἀρετῆς; and what great vertue would this be, when they knew that within so short a space,

* In 1 Th. i. 10. Εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῦτον ἀναμένομεν, οὐκ ἂν ἑαυτὰ κινδυνεύομεν.

* In 1 Th. v. 1.

a ſpace, they ſhould receive their full reward? The vertue of a Chriſtian is to ſuffer long, as well as to ſuffer much, waiting with long patience, as the Husbandman doth for the precious fruit of the Earth.

VI.

And yet it is not ſuch a patience we are to exerciſe, but St. *Peter* gives us leave *to* HASTEN *it*; which is a *ſixth* word whereby the holy writings expreſs this pious affection unto, and vehement deſire of the appearing of Chriſt Jeſus. 2 Pet. iij. 12. *Looking for, and* HASTING *unto, the coming of the day of God.* In the Greek it is not *haſting unto the coming*, but *haſting the coming* (and ſo we render it in the margin) that is, in our wiſhes, moſt ardent longings and gaſpings for it. For ſo that phraſe is obſerved to be uſed by good Authors; in which σπεύδω τὸ σὸν ἀγαθὸν ſignifies I *wiſh thy good:* ſo heartily, that is, that I would make it fly hither, if I were able, as ſwift as my deſires. Σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν.

VII. This

VII.

This declares the higheſt paſſion they had for it: looking upon themſelves as imperfectly happy, till they and their Saviour met together at his coming. Only they had a perfect hope of it, which was an exceeding great comfort to them. So St. *Peter* alſo expreſſes it (which is the next word) *Hope to the end*; or rather (as the tranſlation in the margin renders the Greek τελείως ἐλπίσατε) HOPE PERFECTLY. And with very good reaſon; *becauſe of the grace that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Pet. i. 13. There are great favours to be then beſtowed, moſt ample rewards to be diſtributed; which may juſtly make us value the hope of them, more than all the preſent poſſeſſions of this world; and rejoyce before we have them, that he hath given us ſuch ſolid and firm grounds of hope one day to receive them. Which whoſoever underſtands, as he ought to live upon that hope, and ſupport himſelf with a perfect truſt in him that lives for ever to make good his promiſe: So he cannot but deſire

ſire and pray continually to ſee it accompliſhed.

VIII.

Which is the laſt thing, they cry unto our Saviour and call upon him; beſeeching with fervent deſires that he would come. So ſome underſtand thoſe words xxij. *Rev.* 17. to be the voice of Chriſtian people, not inviting ſtrangers to come and embrace their Religion, but earneſtly inviting our Saviour Chriſt to come to perfect their happineſs. In this they all agreed, *the SPIRIT* (that is, prophetical perſons, indowed with the moſt eminent gifts of the Holy-Ghoſt) and *the BRIDE* (that is, the whole body of the Church) with one conſent *ſay, COME.* And they exhort all others who ſhould read this, and receive Chriſtianity, to joyn with them in theſe prayers; for ſo it follows, *Let him that heareth ſay, COME.* And let every ſoul (that's their concluſion) who thirſts after divine knowledge, eſpecially of future things, come and read this Prophecy; and partake of that refreſhment, that water of Life, which is here freely offered to him.

But if that verſe ſhould have another meaning; yet it is certain that St. *John* himſelf (who was a fit pattern to all thoſe who believed his Book) concludes all his Viſions with a Prayer to Chriſt that he would haſten his coming. For when our Lord had ſaid (v. 20.) *Surely I COME quickly*, He anſwers AMEN to this promiſe: and echoes back his own words to him, *Even ſo*, (let it be ſo) *COME LORD JESUS.* Thy word, is all our wiſhes. There is nothing ſo deſireable, as that thou would'ſt come, and fulfil thy gracious Word.

It will be very fit then for us, who are come a great deal nearer to the day of the Lord, to deſcend down into our ſelves and ſee; what paſſions we have like to theſe, which were of old in Chriſtian breaſts. Let us call our ſelves to a ſtrict account, and examine whether we be in the number of thoſe thirſty ſouls; that have this hearty affection for the appearing of Chriſt. It is ſafe for us to feel the pulſe of our ſouls; and by theſe tokens make a judgement of them, whether they beat Heaven-ward or no. What is it, may every one ſay to himſelf, what is it that I moſt admire, and holds the principal

cipal place in my eſteem? On what is it, that I have fixt my mind, and ſet mine heart? What is the chiefeſt Loadſtone of my affections, and whither doth the main current of them run? To what is it that my actions are addreſſed? What is my Hope, and the ſtrength and ſupport of my heart? If I might have my wiſh, what would I now ſee? The whole world fall down at my feet, to worſhip me; or all theſe things vaniſh and diſappear before the Glory of the Lord Jeſus, that we might go, and fall down, and worſhip His Majeſty? What am I content to ſuffer and endure for this, though I ſtay long before I enjoy it? Hath patience had its perfect work; and do I rejoyce, though in tribulation, in hope of this Glory? Is this my ſatisfaction alſo, in the greateſt fulneſs of worldly goods; and are mine eyes, even then, ever towards the Lord? Am I ſtill looking up unto Jeſus; ſighing for him and ſaying, *Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly?* I can appeal to thee, that thou knoweſt there is nothing I ſo much long for, as that thou would'ſt come. O come, make haſte to come; and ſatisfie the deſires of thy Church, which have long cryed, *Come Lord Jeſus.*

Let us not deceive our ſelves; this great Apoſtle hath pronounced a curſe upon every one that loves not the Lord Jeſus. 1 *Cor.* xvj. 20. And he that loves Him, loves his appearing: and he that loveth his appearing, ſets his thoughts, his heart, his deſign ſo much upon it, as to contrive by all means (whatſoever become of him here) that, when Jeſus who is our life ſhall appear, he may appear with him in his glory. Riches, Greatneſs, Pleaſures, Fame, Long-life, and all the train that waits upon them, are but as ſo many big names; loud, but empty, ſounds which ſignifie nothing to him; in compariſon with theſe exceeding great things, the COMING, the APPEARING, the KINGDOM and the GLORY of Chriſt Jeſus. The ſweeteſt Friend in this world, to whom he hath conceived the moſt paſſionate love, will not hinder him from ſeeking theſe: but rather by that love he will be excited to remember with what inexpreſſible affection he ought to purſue ſuch divine enjoyments; not only for his own ſoul, but for his ſecond ſelf. The beſt wiſh he can make for both is, that they may be carried with the ſame eager deſires

fires and haſty ſpeed, to perfect their love in the incomparably greater joys and bleſſedneſs of Chriſts heavenly kingdom.

So great they are, that, having now finiſhed all that was at firſt propounded to be conſidered on this ſubject, this Love will not be content that I ſhould here make an end. It being ſuch a maſterly affection, and governing the ſoul ſo abſolutely, as hath been related, will not ſuffer us to lay that preſently out of our thoughts, which it hath once planted very deep in our hearts. It is one of its greateſt pleaſures, to think very much of that Good, whoſe company it doth not yet enjoy: and, when it is far diſtant of it ſelf, to make it preſent by a conſtant image of it in the Mind.

And therefore it cannot be any wonder, if we bear a true love to the appearing of Chriſt, that it will not permit us to be willing to ceaſe our Meditations, on ſo delightful an argument. It doth but act according to its nature, if it require us again to take another view of it; and ſpend a few more thoughts upon ſo bright and glorious an object. And happy were it for us, if it were nothing elſe but mere Love, that made me reſume this Diſcourſe

and begin it again; and that made those who read it to be willing or rather desirous to know further, what are the causes of this heavenly affection, to the appearing of our Lord.

For that is it, wherein I intend to imploy the remainder of my thoughts, upon this subject. Love is a passion that is very desirous to feel it self; and to be satisfied of its own sincerity, by the strength, and force, and restlesness of its motion. It fills the heart also with such a secret joy, that it would fain know the very spring of all its delectable motions; and be led to the rise of every one of its desires and inclinations. Both the strangeness and the variety of its surprising pleasures are so great, that our hearts cannot but be invited thereby to the very bottom of it; to see from whence it flows, as we perceive whither it tends. And therefore, as I have touched upon the general cause and reason of this passion of love in the foregoing part of this small Treatise: so it is not fit to deny it, in the following part, a brief consideration of the particular reasons, why it should be set upon the appearing of Christ.

And they may be reduced to these *two* Heads. *First*,

Firſt, The great affection that all good ſouls have for our bleſſed Saviour himſelf: And,

Secondly, The natural affection we all bear to our own good and welfare.

Which when we have conſidered, we ſhall be aſhamed that we do not with greater fervour ſay, with reſpect to this, in our daily prayers, THY KINGDOM COME: And be mightily excited to call upon our ſouls more frequently, to meditate on *that bleſſed hope*, and *to look*, with much affection, *for the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* Who will be ſo much honoured thereby himſelf, and then confer ſuch upon us, as ſhould make us long for the accompliſhment of both.

CHAP. XI.

Reaſons for our Love to this Appearing, drawn from the reſpect we ought to have to our Lord himſelf.

AS for the firſt of theſe, the affection that is due to our bleſſed Saviour, it ought to be ſtrong, you will eaſily confeſs, that death it ſelf ſhould not be an equal match for it: That which conquers all things, ſhould it ſelf be conquered by this; and the king of terrors ſhould yield all his force, and yield himſelf a Captive to the love of the King of Love.

For ſince there is ſo great a power in hearty and unfeigned love, to beget love in thoſe to whom it is expreſſed; and ſince the love whereby our Lord attracts our affection, doth ſo vaſtly exceed all other: it is a prodigious obſtinacy or negligence,

ligence that the dulleſt and heavieſt ſouls are not drawn by ſo big a Loadſtone.

Do we not feel, as I have ſaid elſewhere, ſome motions of kindneſs in our hearts for the moſt contemptible creatures; when they conſtantly fawn upon us, and follow us, and lye down by us, and will by no means leave us, but take our part if any body aſſault us? Are we not much pleaſed with this affection they have to us, and concerned for their ſafety, and ready to reward them with tokens of our love to them? We muſt be infidels then, or very inconſiderate and regardleſs of our bleſſed Saviour; or elſe find our hearts put into the greateſt paſſion, when we read and ſeriouſly weigh the ſtrange expreſſions, which our Saviour hath made, of the moſt endearing love to us.

When we remember how he neglected himſelf, to ſerve us; how he indured hunger and thirſt, that we might be ſatisfied; how he gave the people the very bread out of his mouth, and forgot to feed himſelf, that he might nouriſh them; when we ſee how he addreſſes himſelf unto us; how he wooes and courts us (to ſpeak in our own language) with the greateſt

greateſt kindneſs to come to him; how ſolicitous he is for our happineſs; how he ſighed for us; how he groaned in ſpirit to ſee men ſo obſtinate; how he ſweat; how he bled; how he gave his very life for us; and was content to be expoſed to the greateſt ſhame, rather than we ſhould periſh; what heart can be ſo inſenſible as not to be mightily affected with it, and to think of returning back his love, and that in ſome proportion to the wonderful greatneſs of it?

But then, alas! it muſt be confeſſed that, we find, when our paſſion is ſtirred up, and our hearts begin to burn within us, we have little or nothing there, that is worthy of him. A preſent we would fain make to him, but have none fit to be offered to ſo great a Majeſty. Nay, ſo void many times and empty are our hearts, of all that is good, that we may well be aſhamed to let him ſee them. Our thoughts are ſo dull, and the reſentments we have of his kindneſs ſo feeble and weak, that we our ſelves in whom they are, can ſcarce feel them. And at the beſt our affections are ſo ſmall and ſo ſhort, that we cannot but bluſh to come furniſhed with no better oblation to him.

What

What ſhall we do in this caſe? How ſhall we behave our ſelves with ſome due regard to his incomprehenſible love? Love him we muſt; but love him as he is worthy, and as we would, we are not able. We cannot chooſe but bring him our hearts, and yet we are ſenſible they are not worth the bringing.

We ſhall find our ſelves naturally inclined, in theſe circumſtances, to do juſt as a grateful Poor man doth; who being unable himſelf to requite a Friends courteſies, rejoyces to hear that ſo very great a Perſon will take that care upon him. Or as the Divine Pſalmiſt doth, who finding his own thoughts too ſhort and low, calls upon the Angels, who excel in ſtrength, to ſet forth the praiſes of him, whoſe name is highly exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe. That is, ſince we our ſelves cannot requite the benefits our Lord hath done us, nor worthily magnifie his goodneſs towards us; we ought in all reaſon to be exceeding deſirous that God, *the Father of glory* (as St. *Paul* calls him) would be pleaſed to reward his love, and make his praiſe glorious. Since there is nothing here whereby we can conſiderably honour him; we muſt

needs

needs wiſh the day would come, when *the Bleſſed and only Potentate* will ſhow the reſpect he bears unto him.

As it is a joy to think that he is gone to the Father and there is recompenſed for his ſufferings: ſo it is a matter of greater gladneſs, if we have any love for him, to remember that at his appearing (which he, who is able, will in due time ſhow) he ſhall ſtill be more magnified. This therefore all ſerious Chriſtians cannot but much deſire to ſee. For this they cannot but long extreamly; and call with earneſt expectation for the coming of that joyful day. That, ſince they cannot laud and praiſe him enough now, the whole world may then be gathered together, in one general aſſembly, all Angels, and all Men, and with joynt conſent bow themſelves before him, and humbly acknowledge him to be the LORD OF ALL.

And here I ſhall take the liberty, for the clearer underſtanding of this, to give a diſtinct account, in a few conſiderations, of that which, we may juſtly conceive, will accrue to our bleſſed Saviour by his glorious Appearing.

I. And

I.

And *firſt* of all, there is no doubt but, at his ſecond appearing, our Lord will be *publickly honoured*; and thereby have an amends made him, for the open ſhame and the publick diſgrace, to which he was here expoſed. No Varlet was ever uſed ſo baſely, as the world treated him; when he firſt came to viſit us in much humility. No man was ever the ſubject of ſo much ſcorn, of ſo many ſorrows, and of ſo great pains as he endured. Would it not then be acceptable to you, to ſee his honour every where vindicated; his credit, as I may ſay, repaired; and his glory made no leſs notorious, than his reproaches were?

Who would not wiſh to ſee that ſweet face (which by rude hands was ſo contemptuouſly blinded and buffeted) appear in an unveiled brightneſs; looking with the faireſt, the moſt beautiful and gracious eyes upon us? How is it poſſible to refrain from deſiring to ſee that countenance which was ſpit upon, and all beſpawled by the filthy mouths of wicked men; ſhining with rayes brighter than the

the Sun, and gliſtring in the Glory and Majeſty of God the Father? Are you not impatient to behold that Head, which was inviron'd with Thorns, ſhow it ſelf with a royal Crown upon it? Would you not fain ſee him as much admired, as he was deſpiſed; as highly praiſed and extolled, as he was vilely mockt and flouted?

O that I might behold that time arrive (is every devout lover of the Lord Jeſus apt to ſay) *O that I might be bleſſed with a ſight of that Glory and Honour, wherewith, we believe, thou art already crowned! Thou waſt ſorely wounded and groſly abuſed, O dear Saviour, by thoſe whom thou cameſt to heal and to ſave. They barbarouſly ſmote and beſmeared thy holy face; they nailed thee to a Croſs; they pierced thy hands and thy feet; they thruſt a ſpear into thy ſide and left thee all in gore; they condemned thee as the ſouleſt Malefactor; and crucified thy Name and Reputation, as well as thy ſelf. And, which is worſe, how have thine own followers grieved thee, and pricked thy very heart, by their baſe ingratitude to thee; who waſt pleaſed to be thus vilely uſed for their ſake?*

And

And what reparation, are the beſt among us able to make thee? What does it amount unto, that ſuch poor wretches as we can do for thee? How mean and inconſiderable is all the honour and all the praiſe that we, little and worthleſs things, can pretend to give thee?

O thou God of love, thou Father of mercies, we muſt addreſs our deſires to thee; and beſeech thee, that thou wouldſt be pleaſed to do it for us. Thou, who art the Bleſſed and only Potentate; who haſt already appointed him to be heir of all things; who haſt given him a more excellent inheritance than the Angels; and when thou broughteſt him into the world, didſt command them all to worſhip him; finiſh I beſeech thee, according to the riches of thy glory, the recompenſes thou haſt begun to make him. Let me and all men elſe ſee how Thou loveſt him, and what honour thou haſt conferred on him.

Behold how this ſoul ſighs out its deſires to thee, that thou wouldſt vouchſafe to haſten his Appearing; and to ſhow him to the world in the glory which thou haſt given him. Let us all behold him as highly exalted, as he was lowly depreſſed and abaſed. Let us SEE HIM AS HE IS, *the Prince of Life,*

Life, the King of Glory. O perfect that which concerneth him. Let him come, and receive our universal acknowledgements. Let all Kings fall down before him, and all nations serve him. Let them all call him blessed, and Heaven and Earth be filled with his glory. Amen *and* Amen.

II.

They may well pray after this manner, and speak of his *perfecting*, that which is begun; because (*secondly*) till the day of his glorious appearing, it is most certain, his conquests will not be compleated over all his enemies. The very greatest of them will remain unsubdued, till he come then to tread them under his feet. Which cannot but dispose us to love that time above all other; because it will make him perfectly victorious.

He is sat down, saith the Apostle, at Gods right hand (x. Heb. 12, 13.) *from thenceforth EXPECTING till his enemies be made his footstool.* Though he be highly advanced, that is, above all creatures, yet all his enemies do not presently fall down before him: but he must stay sometime before, not only all the adverse

verſe Empires on earth ſubmit themſelves to him but, the Principalities alſo in the Air, and Death it ſelf; which is the *laſt enemy*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *which ſhall be deſtroyed, and put under his feet.* He rules and reigns indeed; but ſtill he hath many oppoſers of his Kingdom. He waits likewiſe for their utter ſubverſion and looks for their total ruine; but ſtill they ſpoil and commit many waſtes within his territories. The Devil tyrannizes and rages in a number of places; and Death (as I muſt ſhow anon) devours all.

How can we chooſe then, but wait for that, of which he himſelf is in expectation? Where is our love to him, if we can ceaſe to wiſh that all thoſe foes who deſpiſe or refuſe his Government, were perfectly brought in ſubjection to him? Is there any thing more deſireable, to thoſe who pray ſeriouſly his Kingdom may come, than to ſee thoſe put under his feet, who now proudly trample upon his ſoveraign Authority? What more joyful ſight can there be to them, than to behold the Devil, who now inſults ſo inſolently in his Dominions, deſpoiled of all his power; and thruſt down into the eternal Priſons and Chains of Darkneſs,

to which he is reſerved? To ſay nothing yet, of the glory it will be to him, to overcome Death it ſelf, to which even all his ſubjects are forced at preſent to ſubmit.

O bleſſed Saviour (ſhould all Chriſtian ſouls ſay, with one conſent) *it afflicts us to hear thine enemies roar in the midſt of thy Congregation; to ſee them thus triumph and ſet up their banners. And ſo more grievous it is to think, that we have ever been in the number of them; and given the leaſt countenance and ſupport to this helliſh Kingdom. The remembrance of it is bitter to us, that there was a time (wretches that we were) when we were drawn aſide to joyn our ſelves to this wicked faction; and abett the Apoſtate ſpirits in their rebellion againſt thee, their ſoveraign Creator.*

But bleſſed be thy Goodneſs, thou haſt overcome our diſobedient hearts; and reſtored us to an happy accord with thee. We thank thee for it with all our ſouls; and wiſh we might likewiſe ſee all Nations fall down before thee and worſhip thee. What a joy would it be to ſee all the kingdoms of the

the earth, become the kingdoms of thee, O Chriſt? What greater pleaſure can our hearts deſire? which are not able to expreſs the ſatisfaction it would give them, to behold the kingdom of darkneſs, which is ſhaken already, falling flat upon the ground.

Overturn it, overturn it, O thou moſt Mighty, utterly overturn it. O come, and do that which we endeavour but cannot do. Come, and let us ſee thee vindicate thy ſelf, from the affronts of all thine inſolent enemies. Let us ſee all the Legions of Evil-Spirits, haled as Captives at the wheels of thy triumphant Chariot. Let us ſee all the Powers of the Air flying away at thy preſence, to hide themſelves in the pit of Hell for ever.

O thou who haſt ſubdued us unto thee, ſubdue them likewiſe and bring them under thee. Thou who didſt wreſt us out of their hands, wreſt from them all their power, and leave them none to get any more into their hands. As thou haſt conquered; ſo we would gladly ſee thee triumph. As thou haſt overcome; ſo we would fain ſee thee carried in magnificent and royal ſtate, as the moſt victorious LORD OF HOSTS.

Haſte thee therefore, O ſweet Saviour, to receive our Ovations. Come, that all the

world may give thee, the acclamations which thou deſerveſt. Why is thy Chariot ſo long in coming? Why ſtay the wheels of thy Chariot? O that it would pleaſe thee to come, while our ſouls are peeping out of their windows to look for thee: while they call, and cry, and ſigh after thee: while they are full charged, with ſhouts and praiſes to beſtow upon thee.

III.

There is very great reaſon, you cannot but ſee, that they ſhould be thus deſirous of his appearing; becauſe, it is manifeſt by what hath been now ſaid, it will bring along with it ſome addition of Glory to our Deareſt Lord.

If we had a Friend who was elected to be a King, ſhould we not often call for the day that would place him on his Throne? Or if he were ſeated there, but had ſome rebellious Subjects ſtill in arms, in a corner of his Country; ſhould we not be in ſome pain, till we ſaw his conquering banners return with their ſpoils? Or if that were done, and a time then prefixt for a ſolemn meeting of all the Eſtates of his Realm, in the midſt of which he

he intended to ſit himſelf with the greateſt Pomp; ſhould we not think it long till we ſaw him ſhine there, and receive the homage of ſo many illuſtrious Perſons?

Tell your ſelves then, with what ardors you ſhould wait for the coming of your Lord. Who, though he be now Crowned, yet doth not for the preſent ſee all his enemies ſubdued; nor appears, as yet, in the grand aſſembly not only of the Angels and mighty men, but of all people whatſoever, who ſhall be gathered before his Majeſty.

It is true indeed, he being inthroned in the Heavens, ſits there in royal Honour and Glory. But St. *Luke* tells us (as you heard before ix. 26.) that he will appear in the end of the world, not only in his *own glory*, but in the *glory of his Father* alſo: As if that were ſomething more, than what he hath already received at his right hand. That is, he will come from thence to judge the quick and the dead. Which will be an exceeding great glory, ſuch an high honour as was never conferred upon any perſon whatſoever; to *have all judgement committed unto him*, and ſuſtain the very place of the Supreme

Lord and Governour of the World, to whom Men and Angels are accountable for their actions. This is a thing that is ſtill behind: and there are, it ſeems, ſome royal Majeſtick robes belonging to this high Office, which he hath not yet put on.

O how much ſhould we deſire to have Him clothed with them? How earneſtly ſhould we look, to behold him decked with that Majeſty, and arrayed in his moſt glorious attire? It ſhould not be enough to us, to believe that he reigns; but we ſhould long to ſee the laſt exerciſe, and the greateſt proof of his Kingly Authority: which is to judge the world in righteouſneſs, and to reward all men according to their works.

O God, ſhould every true Chriſtian ſay, *who, according to thy faithful word, haſt glorified thy Son Jeſus, and committed all Judgement to him; haſten the day, when thou wilt complete the glory thou haſt given him, and gather all nations before him. Cloath him in the Glorious Robes of thy Majeſty; and let him appear in his Meridian brightneſs. Send him forth of thy*

Sanctu-

Sanctuary; and let him outſhine the Sun in his ſtrength.

O that he would ſhine forth, and ſhoot his rayes as far as this earth. Let them not be confined to the higheſt Heavens; but let the air and theſe inferiour regions be all gilded with the ſplendor of his beams.

O bleſſed Jeſus, that we might behold thy light breaking out, to baniſh all this ſmoak, and diſperſe theſe vapours, wherein we are incloſed. Let the Troops of thy holy Angels come, and expel thoſe evil Spirits which have poſſeſſed themſelves of theſe aerial places. Let thy glorious throne be ſet there, where they have ſo long ruled.

Ariſe, and ſhow thy ſelf, O thou Judge of the World. Let them all know that they are ſubject to thy tribunal. And ſentence them to their proper habitations; that after thy appearing they may diſappear, and never break looſe to infeſt or trouble us any more.

Then will thy faithful ſervants ſhout aloud for joy, and triumph in thy praiſe. They will ſing a new Song before thy Throne, and magnifie thee in ſome ſuch words as theſe.

Who in the Heavens can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the Sons of

lxxxix. Pſal. 6. xv. Rev. 3, 4. the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are thy wayes, thou King of Saints. Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy Name? For thou only art holy: All Nations are come to worſhip before thee; for thy judgements are made manifeſt.

IV.

And upon this account we ſhould be the more deſirous to ſee that great day; becauſe till then he will want the glory of having us and all his faithful Subjects, attend upon him in his heavenly Kingdom. It is a very ſmall glory indeed, you may be apt to think, that he can receive from ſuch poor things as we are. Who muſt acknowledge that we are unworthy, utterly unworthy of the favour to approach unto him; and if we ſhould be ſo vain as to think otherwiſe, deſerve to be baniſhed for ever from his bleſſed preſence. But when we remember how great his love is, and what he hath promiſed to do for us, we muſt likewiſe confeſs, to the glory of his Grace, that he can and will raiſe us ſo much above our ſelves; that it

ſhall

ſhall be an honour to him to have ſuch ſubjects, who by his Almighty Power are ſo nobly preferred. The magnificence and greatneſs of his Kingdom, will appear in the greatneſs and ſplendor of all his Friends and followers. It ſhall be ſeen in them, what he is, and how highly God the Father hath exalted him; whom *he gave him to be the head over all things to the Church: which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.* i. Epheſ. 22, 23.

Certain it is he cannot be perfect (as he is the *Head* of the Church) without all his members. In which regard ſeveral, both of the Greek and Latine Fathers, * think that his *Body*, the Church, is called his FULNESS; becauſe he will not be abſolutely compleated and conſummated, till all his members be knit together in one body, and joyned to him, in ſuch a glory as is befitting thoſe that are ſo nearly related to him: who is able to communicate to them out of his fulneſs, what excellencies he pleaſes. This, ſays St. *Chryſoſtom, is the hope of our calling*; (which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of before) *the riches of the glory of the inheritance; the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward who believe.* * *V. S. Chryſ. Oecumenium, S. Hieron.*

For

For whom he hath ſuch an affection, and loves us with ſo great tenderneſs; that he doth not think himſelf intirely happy, unleſs we be promoted to be with him where he is, and to reign with him for ever. So much is his heart ſet upon our advancement, that he accounts himſelf to be but in part glorious; till we be numbred among his Saints in glory everlaſting.

Then will he ſhine in greater ſplendor and majeſty than ever; according to thoſe words of St. *Paul* in another place, 2 *Theſſ.* i. 10. where he ſaith, *He ſhall come to be* GLORIFIED *in his Saints, and to be* ADMIRED *in all them that believe.* For *firſt* of all (as *Oecumenius* hath collected the ſenſe of the ancient Fathers about this buſineſs) it will be a glory to him, that he hath ſo many Saints, to whom he will diſtribute his goods, and make illuſtrious with him. For as his riches, ſaith he, is our ſalvation, ſo it will be a glory to him. And *ſecondly*, He will be glorified alſo by his Saints, when they ſhall behold him ſitting ἐν τῇ πατρῴᾳ δόξῃ, *&c.* in his Fathers Glory, the God and the Judge of all. And *thirdly*, We may add that the Saints will procure him glory from the

the ſpiritual powers, when they ſhall ſee what a recompenſe of reward he hath vouchſafed to his ſervants. Who as they ſhall give occaſion to his being *glorified*, ſo to his being *admired* alſo: becauſe it will be a moſt wonderful and amazing ſight to ſee thoſe, who were thought ſo vile and abject in this preſent life that they were perſecuted and murdered, accounted worthy then of ſuch and ſo great good things as he will beſtow upon them.

And truly, as our Lord will be thus magnified and admired at that day; ſo this ought now to be very wonderful in our eyes. Who have little conſideration, if we be not exceedingly in love with his appearing; when ſelf-love ſo ſtrongly inclines and prompts our affection to it. Can we find in our hearts to turn away our eyes from that, or ceaſe to long for it with ardent deſire; which Nature it ſelf calls for, as the greateſt Good? Here our own intereſt combines with his, to make us wiſh for that bleſſed day; which ſhall make him more illuſtrious, by the brightneſs of our glory. Here two great Seas meet and run into one; to make our ſouls ſwell and riſe up in bigger expectations of his happineſs.

Come,

Come, ſhould your heart and mine ſay, *come, O bleſſed Jeſus; and at once make us and thy ſelf intirely glorious. Ariſe, O thou Sun of Righteouſneſs, and ſhed thy beams ſo plentifully upon us, that we may ſhine with thee, as the Sun in the Kingdom of the Father.*

Great are the things which are ſpoken of thy coming; when the exceeding greatneſs of thy power ſhall appear, to us-ward who believe. O come, and compleat thine own fulneſs; by filling us, out of thine exuberant Goodneſs, with all the bleſſings of thine heavenly Inheritance. Do not want that happineſs any longer; which will make us happy too, together with thee. Delay not to put on thoſe Kingly Robes; wherein when thou appeareſt, we ſhall be promoted to reign as Kings with thee for ever.

How will our raviſht ſpirits then rejoyce, in that great ſalvation! How will they triumph, to ſee every knee bow to thine exalted Name! Nay, to ſee thee admired in us; when thou ſhalt exalt the honour of thy people, the praiſe of all thy Saints.

cxlviij. Pſal. 14.

O come, that the greatneſs of thy Glory and Majeſty may appear in thy Saints;

and thy wonderful power and love in all thoſe that believe.

And till thou comeſt, let all thy Saints be joyful in glory. Let them ſing aloud in perfect quiet and repoſe. Yea, let the high praiſes of our God be in their mouth; who hath given us hope of victory over all our enemies. Let them never ceaſe to praiſe him; who takes pleaſure in his people, and will beautifie them with his Salvation. cxlix. 4, 5.

Praiſe him, who hath promiſed to come, and viſit us in greater love than ever. Praiſe him who is the head over all things to the Church; and will preſent it to himſelf a glorious Church, not having ſpot or wrinkle or any ſuch thing. Let his name be alway engraven upon our hearts; who hath comforted us with the bleſſed hope, of ſeeing him in all his glory. Let the memory of his tranſcendent love be ever moſt dear unto us; who intends to lift us up, to ſit with him in Heavenly places. Let us never forget to rejoyce in his holy Name; with whom we expect to rejoyce in the higheſt happineſs of endleſs Life. v. Eph. 27.

And, O bleſſed Jeſus, that we may be ſo happy now, as to long for that day, on thy account, as well as our own. May it delight us to think, how thou wilt be admired

mired and highly praiſed, in our exaltation. Make us ſo much in love with thee, as to deſire to ſee our ſelves raiſed unto honour; becauſe it will make thee alſo appear in greater glory.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Other Reaſons why we ſhould love his appearing, drawn from the love we have to our ſelves.

THus I have made a fair way, to introduce the *ſecond* thing which I propounded, for the compleating of this Diſcourſe. Wherein I am to ſhow, how the natural Affection we all bear to our ſelves, ſhould powerfully diſpoſe us to love the Appearing of our Lord Jeſus. And this will admit of no leſs than theſe *TEN* Conſiderations: which will inſtantly, at the very firſt hearing, win our aſſent to the truth of them. For,

I.

Firſt, We cannot but paſſionately deſire, if we have any belief of this Appearing, to ſee ſo great an honour, as will then

then be done to our Nature. So great, that no ſoul, who is poſſeſſed with a lively ſenſe of it, can be tempted any longer to envy the greatneſs of the nobleſt Perſons; no, not the high dignity of the bleſſed Angels. The brighteſt of the Cherubins ſhould not be ſo grievous to us, as to hurt our eyes; nor the flames of the Seraphims touch us with the leaſt ſpark of indignation, to ſee our ſelves ſo much excelled by them: But we ſhould rather wiſh they were more glorious and illuſtrious; becauſe the greater they are, the greater will the advancement of our nature be, which, at the appearing of Chriſt, will ſhine in a place ſo far above the higheſt of them.

Thoſe heavenly Creatures indeed are ſo ſplendid; that we poor mortals, even the holieſt of us, were wont to be afraid at their appearance. They are too glittering for our weak eyes to behold: too full of luſtre, for us, who dwell in theſe caves of darkneſs, to converſe withall. Whence it was, that ſome pious people, in ancient times, preſently concluded they ſhould dye, if they ſaw an Angel: imagining that his buſineſs, when he appeared, was to fetch their ſouls from their bodies;

bodies; in which while they lived, they were not fit for ſuch Society. And other excellent perſons were ſo amazed at the glory of theſe celeſtial Miniſters, that they thought of paying them no leſs than religious honour; and prepared themſelves to fall down before them and worſhip them as Gods.

O what an happineſs then will it be, to ſee our Natures ſo improved and exalted; that we ſhall be able to entertain their company, without any trembling at all: and inſtead of thoſe paralytick fears, be only ſtruck with a delightful ſenſe of the moſt harmonious joyes? What a glory will it be unto us, what a joy, to find our ſelves made equal to thoſe, whom we took for Gods? To behold our ſelves as bright as thoſe celeſtial fires; which were wont to dazzle the eyes of the greateſt ſouls, and poſſeſs them with an apprehenſion, that they were Divine Beings?

But eſpecially we ought to conſider, what an honour, what a ſatisfaction it will be, to behold, not ſo few as one, or two, or a thouſand of thoſe beautiful Creatures but, the whole Heavenly Court, (whom we were ready to adore) come

all with bended knees, and humbly proſtrate themſelves in the moſt profound adorations, at the feet of our ever bleſſed Saviour, Chriſt Jeſus. Into what a rapture will it caſt us, to behold our Nature ſo advanced; that all the Gods ſhall approach and worſhip this ſame Jeſus, who was ſo debaſed and abuſed? A moſt glorious and delightful ſight it will be, to behold him in the head of all thoſe Heavenly Hoſts: to ſee all the air filled, with the ſeveral Legions of Holy Angels: to behold every Troop in that glorious Camp, paying their reſpect to our far more glorious Lord; and with their ſhouts and joyful acclamations following him, as their General and chief Commander: And all the Powers of Darkneſs likewiſe crouching at his feet, quaking at his Majeſtick Preſence, diſarmed of all their weapons, and confeſſing themſelves the Captives and Slaves of this victorious Prince, Chriſt Jeſus.

O my ambitious deſires, where are you? What is become of you, O my aſpiring thoughts? You that uſed to be ever climbing aloft, and perpetually heaving up my heart;

heart; whither are you gone, or into what dulneſs are you now ſunk down? What is the matter that you lye aſleep; when ſo fair an object preſents it ſelf, to awaken and rouze you up? What ailes you, that I do not feel you ſtir; who were wont, with leſs temptations, to be all on fire?

Is there any thing we can reaſonably thirſt after with ſo much ardor, as to have all the world behold us made the companions of Angelical Natures? What is there that you can fancy a higher glory, than to ſee this fleſh of ours taking place of the Heavenly Spirits? To behold all the Armies of Heaven and Earth, waiting upon the ſupreme Judge of the World, the Man Chriſt Jeſus?

Get up then, get up, and pray perpetually that this moſt bleſſed time may come. Rouze up your ſelves, and in your moſt paſſionate wiſhes, fly before-hand thitherward. Let this be the But at which you ſhoot, the mark at which you alwayes aim, O my winged thoughts, and haſty deſires. Let this be the end of all your labours, O my buſie and reſtleſs powers. And content your ſelves in any condition, till this moſt happy ſtate ſhall come. Live upon this joyful hope. Chear up your ſelves with theſe

moſt comfortable expectations. They cannot be utterly miſerable, no, they muſt needs be very happy whatſoever their troubles be, who look for ſuch an incomparable glory.

Rejoyce therefore, and more than that, make your boaſt in this perpetually; that one day Angels themſelves, who are out of the reach of our preſent calamities, ſhall not excel you: But if there be any difference, it ſhall be only ſuch as was between the men of Judah *and the men of* Iſrael *(at the bringing back of King* David *to his Throne) that you ſhall be able to call this great* Son of David *BONE OF YOUR BONE, AND FLESH OF YOUR FLESH, when the higheſt Angels can challenge no ſuch intereſt in him.*

O moſt bleſſed Hope! the ſtaff of our Life; the ſtay and the ſtrength of our Hearts! The ſecurity of the happy, and the ſanctuary of the afflicted! that which preſerves our joyes from becoming ſowre, and which ſweetens the bitterneſs of all our miſeries! Our Reſt, our Peace, our higheſt Satisfaction!

It is enough that I am owner of ſuch a glorious Hope. Be thou ever in mine eye; be thou ever in my heart. I will walk, and

and labour all the dayes of my life in this holy Hope. And I will lye down at last in hope; that Thou who now sendest down thy Angels to minister unto us, wilt call us up unto thy self, and make us to sit with thee in those Heavenly Regions.

O come, come Lord Jesus, that we may be all so happy. And till thou comest, descend sometimes into this heart, which loves thee and longs for thee: and lift it up unto thee, in more ardent desires, earnest indeavours, and holy hopes: to see thy glory, and to appear in glory together with thee.

II.

It will be very strange, if we believe in Christ, and be not possessed with these desires; when we attend to the secret inclinations there are in every one of our hearts, to wish we might be blessed with the sight of him, who is so lovely, and who hath loved us so much; whom hitherto our eyes have never seen.

For did any body ever hear of a most excellently accomplisht person, full of the most obliging kindness to him, and that had infinitely merited of him, and designed all the honour in the world for

him; and not feel a moſt paſſionate longing deſire burning in him, to behold the face of this Great man, who had an heart ſo tender, ſo noble, and ſo graciouſly affected towards him?

This is our caſe; who live in theſe remote places and ages of the world, and have heard indeed, with the hearing of the ear, of Chriſt Jeſus our Deareſt Saviour; and of his incomparable love; and of the honour he hath done us, and ſtill intends to do us: But have not yet been ſo happy, as to have our eyes intertained, much leſs ſatisfied, with the bliſsful ſight of him; as theirs were who lived near him, and converſed with him at his firſt appearing. If we had any hope therefore of his appearing again, though in leſs ſplendor than I have told you, we could not but look up unto Heaven, where he lives, with earneſt expectations, and ſay; When will he come, when will he come, and manifeſt himſelf viſibly unto us? Becauſe, as yet, we know nothing of him but by the report of thoſe, who had the honour to be EYE-WITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY.

We have been told by them that they ſaw this amiable and gracious perſon, and clear-

clearly diſcerned that he was *God manifeſted in the fleſh.* They have aſſured us that he was born of a ſpotleſs Virgin; that his name was *Jeſus*; that he was acknowledged the Son of God, by voices from Heaven, and by the deſcent of the Holy-Ghoſt in a viſible manner upon his head; and yet that he was contented to become poor and mean, that he might inrich us; to ſuffer his hands, and his feet, and his heart to be pierced, that he might heal our wounds: yea, we have heard that he deſcended into the lowermoſt parts of the Earth for our Salvation; and that he roſe from the dead again after three dayes; and that he aſcended up on high, and now ſits at the right hand of the Father; and will come again to judge the world, and to take up his faithful Servants unto himſelf.

And moſt comfortable news all this is, which hath arrived at our ears; and we muſt needs with all thankfulneſs dutifully acknowledge, that we are marvellouſly beholden to the Almighty Goodneſs, which hath taken ſuch care to perſwade and fully aſſure us of its truth. But ſtill every pious heart that ſincerely and ardently loves Him is apt to ſay;

When will he come again; that then we may ſee, as now we believe the certain truth of all this; which we have heard of him with our ears? When ſhall we be ſatisfied by ſuch evidence as the Apoſtles, and other of his Attendants had; who beheld his perſon, and ſaw his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth? *May not we alſo hope to be as they were,* eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty?

O when will his holy Angels deſcend unto us, and ſay, as they did to them; Come, and ſee that he is riſen? When ſhall we hear a voice from Heaven, ſaying; come up hither, and behold my beloved Son, in whom I am ever well pleaſed? When will the trump of the Archangel ſound; and proclaim in all our ears, that he is Judge of quick and dead? O how many days muſt we ſtay and wait, before we riſe again, to aſcend up to him where he is? How long will it be, before we leave this earth, to behold him exalted at the right hand of the Majeſty on high?

O moſt gracious Saviour, who haſt done ſuch great things for us; Come, and let us ſee that thou art alive, and ſtill loveſt us! Come, and put us out of all doubt, that thou liveſt for evermore! Let us behold thoſe bright,

thoſe

thoſe loving eyes, which wept ſo oft, and with ſo much kindneſs over us! Let us ſee that ſweet, and now moſt glorious face; which ſweat as it had been drops of blood for our ſake! Stretch forth thoſe hands, that were wounded in our ſervice; O ſtretch them out, to lay hold on us, and lift us up to the viſion of thee! Do not long defer, before thou letteſt us enjoy, what we now believe. Make no long tarrying, O bleſſed Lord, but turn the faith of thy ſervants into ſight. And by thy ſecond appearing, be pleaſed to make us as ſure, as thou didſt thoſe, who then lived, by thy firſt.

We are perſwaded that the fame of thoſe things which we wait for, is nothing comparable to the ſight of them. We cannot but think that all preſent reports fall far ſhort, infinitely ſhort of future enjoyment. Thy type, the great Solomon, *O Lord, puts us in mind of thee; and makes us more deſirous to ſee thee. We would fain go, like the Queen of* Sheba, *from theſe furthermoſt parts of the earth; that we may ſtand before thee in thy heavenly* Jeruſalem. *Not the half, we believe, of thy Magnificence hath been related to us. No, not the ſhadow of thy glory and Majeſty hath been brought to theſe far diſtant climates; where we hear little or nothing of thee.* Nay,

Nay, we believe we cannot now understand thy greatneſs, if it ſhould be all related to us. If we ſhould ſee thee as thou art, in thy royal apparel, on the Throne of thy Glory, with all thy Heavenly Attendants and noble Miniſters round about thee; there would be no more ſpirit left within us. *We ſhould faint away under the weight of that ſight; unleſs thou, O Lord, wouldſt disburden us of this fleſh, and make us become all Spirit.*

And that's the happineſs indeed, which we deſire; and groan in Spirit till we injoy. There is no greater good we can wiſh, than to be caught up from this earth; and have eyes beſtowed upon us, bright and ſtrong enough to behold thy Majeſty. We cannot but long for this; that we may ſtand in thy preſence, and be ſatisfied with thee: that we may ſee thee, who haſt loved us, and given thy ſelf for us: thee whoſe love hath won our hearts, and conducted us thus far in our way towards thee: thee who art our hope; and with whom our life is hid: That we may ſee thee, O Lord, in the height of thy glory, and thy face may ſhine upon us, and our eyes ſparkle for joy with the light of thy Countenance: Of which we are the more deſirous, becauſe we never

never yet had the favour to ſee thee, who art ſo dear unto us.

O favour us therefore ſo much, moſt gracious Lord, as to come and gratifie our deſires, with that unknown, that long lookt for ſight of thee.

III.

And there is ſtill a greater reaſon to deſire it, and to be in love with his appearing; becauſe then we hope to be perfected and conſummated in Love.

This is an affection, you have heard, ſo pleaſurable; that we are inticed thereby, or rather ſweetly forced to ſtrain our ſouls to the utmoſt expreſſion of it. When we have found an object worthy of this paſſion, the delight it gives us invites, nay compels, our hearts to the moſt abundant effuſion of it; that ſo we may not want the higheſt degree of delight and joy.

But alas! Love in this world, though exceeding ſweet, is not, as we uſually ſpeak, all Hony; but there is ſome bitterneſs mingled together with it. The heart that is ſtruck with it receives a wound (which cannot be perfectly healed

ed till it enjoys its desires) and that you know is not without the company of anguish and pain.

1. For we find that when men admit into their hearts the love of any mortal creature like themselves, the soul which before was whole, unbroken and intire, is as it were separated and torn by this passion, both from it self and all other objects; save only that which hath engaged its affection. Now all men know that no heart can be thus parted and divided, without a sense of grief and smart, attending on such a divulsion and rending of it from it self: till it feel that soul, which it loves as another self, effectually joyned to it.

And then (2.) we find that after it hath obtained well assured hopes of this; yet those eager desires and longings that are in this passion, still carry their sting in them; and make the heart but ill at ease until they be accomplished. Both which it were easie to apply to that devout affection, wherewith pious souls are touched towards our blessed Saviour; which is very unquiet and full of trouble, till they know and feel that he loves them.

3. But

3. But I ſhall rather obſerve (which is peculiar to this holy love) that the wounds, as I may call them, which are made in any heart by the wonderful kindneſs of our Saviour, who loved us ſo much as to dye for us, are wont very oft to be a torment to it; becauſe it can love him no more, and doth not feel ſuch vehement tranſports of affection to him, as it deſires, and he hath merited.

And then (4.) though we are fully perſwaded that we do ſincerely and heartily love him; yet this proves a great trouble to us, here in this preſent ſtate, that we fancy him ſometimes to be a ſtranger to us; and he ſeems to treat us, as if he were ſuſpicious of our Love.

And (5.) when we have the greateſt ſenſe of his moſt tender mercies, and he ſheds abroad his love in our hearts; This creates a new grief, becauſe he ſtays no longer with us, and we cannot call him back, as oft as we pleaſe, to give us thoſe delicious taſtes of his infinite Love.

But (6.) there is nothing ſo conſiderable in this matter, as that we cannot enjoy thoſe gracious viſits from our Lord (of which we are ſo deſirous, and which fill

fill the heart with the greateſt love to him and delight in him (but they conclude in ſighs and groans, and leave us much unſatisfied, while we are in this mortal body. That very love which God himſelf excites, thoſe Heavenly impreſſions which his own hand makes upon our hearts, the greateſt ardors of divine affection wherewith we are inſpired from above; are not without their pangs of trouble in all thoſe, who with earneſt intention of mind and moſt hearty deſires, give up themſelves to follow them, and ſeriouſly endeavour to comply with them.

For while a devout ſoul (that is in a lively manner touched by him) ſtretches its wings, as I may ſay, and ſpreads it ſelf with great affection that it may mount up in vehement love unto him; It preſently feels how unable it is to anſwer thoſe divine motions, and ſees, to its ſorrow, that its wings are not grown large enough, to bear it ſo high, as it then aſpires. There is a powerful ſpirit indeed, which ſtimulates it to fly aloft, where he is; but while it endeavours to obey its inſpirations, it is ſtrongly dragged and pulled down by the earthly tabernacle; to

theſe inferiour enjoyments. It is born away with violent and ſwift deſires; and at the ſame time ſinks below, and ſadly flaggs for want of power.

Like the Bird that is not yet fully fledg'd, which would fain fly when it hears the Mother call; but finding its wings too weak, is forced to fall into ſome hedge or tree, and there is content to hop up and down, and pleaſe it ſelf in its little chirpings among the branches: ſo doth the devout ſoul feel it ſelf when it is very deſirous to correſpond with the heavenly motions that are ſtirring in it; and when it thinks it hears the Father of Spirits, ſaying, Come up hither. It fails in the attempt; and can only make ſome ſmall, but feeble, eſſays towards its celeſtial country. It is ſoon tired and grows weary; and while it pants and breaths after high and excellent things, cannot reach them or come nigh them: but faints away and ſpends it ſelf in ſighs, which are ſo much the ſadder; becauſe it ſees the ſpatious Heavens before its eyes, and yet muſt be content to drop down and ſit ſtill upon the Earth.

Yea, the very ſtretching of her wings puts the ſoul to pain, when ſhe cannot fly.

*

fly. The ſtraining of her ſelf is very uneaſie; when ſhe can only groan, but not raiſe up her ſelf to the pitch that ſhe deſires. She ſuffers a kind of torment between theſe two; the ſtrength of her affections, and the weakneſs of her ability; the ſharpneſs of her ſight, and the dulneſs of her enjoyment.

O miſerable Creature that I am, what ſhall I do? (is the dejected ſoul in this caſe apt to ſay.) *Pardon me, Dear Lord, if my great love to thee make me call my ſelf miſerable; when I know that I am very happy. It is my deſire to be nearer to thee, which makes me deplore, not only my diſtance from thee but, the feebleneſs of my ſoul in its endeavours to approach thee.*

O what a change have a few moments made in me! I thought juſt now I was going up to Heaven; and alas! here I lye at this preſent ſighing upon the ground. The Divine breath, methought, was carrying me above; and I, unable to accompany it, am ſtill here below. I felt as if I was all life and ſpirit a little while ago; and now I am almoſt dead. I ſeemed as if I ſhould have quite forgot this world; and now I can ſcarce think of any thing elſe.

O how

O how sweet would it be, but to remember the tasts that I had of thy transcendent love! whereas now, alas! I can scarce relish any thing that is good. What shall I do with my self? Or what shall I desire for this poor soul, which is thus sadly burdened, and pressed down by the corruptible body?

My heart is with Jesus; but, O how little do I enjoy of him? I am not my self, I am become another thing than I was before; and yet how little is there of Jesus in me? How wide is the distance still between me and my dearest Lord? How do I long to be exactly like him, but how short, O how vastly short am I of him? And how like a stranger doth he sometime seem? How do I lose, in this blind and dark estate, the sight and sense of his most pretious love? I know my heart loves him; but what a grief is it, that my love is so weak, so dull, so little worthy of him?

O blessed Jesus, what a favour is it, that thou wilt be pleased to cast, at any time, a gracious look, upon such a cold and sensless heart, as this of mine? With what thanks ought I to receive, the smallest testimony of thine inestimable love? Which is so sweet, that it makes us sigh because we can enjoy no

more of it. Ah! that this veſſel ſhould be ſo narrow and ſtrait, as to contain ſo little of thy love! Ah the dulneſs of this heart, which entertains thee ſo poorly; that it is no wonder thou makeſt ſo ſhort a ſtay, ſo exceeding ſhort a ſtay with me! How ſad is it to think of this heavy clog, which will never let me follow thee far; when I have the ſtrongeſt attractions from thee?

Fain would my ſoul climb up unto thee; but when I have got a little way, down I come, and have loſt that glorious ſight I had of thee. And if thou art pleaſed to lift me up as high as Heaven; how ſoon is the mind weighed down again, while it muſeth upon thoſe celeſtial things? O the conſtant joyes which I hoped to have! how are they vaniſhed? O the ſatisfaction which began to be in this heart; which now lyes groveling in the duſt, filled with nothing but ſighings after thee!

And bleſſed be thy Goodneſs, that it doth ſigh after thee. I thank thee that I feel ſuch love, ſuch vehement deſire there, as makes it long for more of thee. I will never ceaſe to ſigh after thee. I will ſtill long for that time, when thou, Lord, wilt be pleaſed to appear, and make all ſighing fly away, by a conſtant ſight and enjoyment of thee. For this I will

groan,

groan, that I may be ſo happy as to ſee thee; and that thou wilt make me as ſtrong, as ſometime thou makeſt me deſirous, to accompany thee. I will pray for this, that thou wouldeſt come, and heal thoſe wounds which love hath made; by making me perfect in thy love.

O come therefore, Deareſt Lord, and turn my deſires into enjoyment, my ſickneſs into health, my weakneſs into ſtrength, theſe flutterings of my ſoul into a flight: into a flight, I ſay, from this earth into the air; where I may no ſooner wiſh to be with thee, but I may feel my ſoul ſnatcht away, and leap for joy to find it ſelf in thy embraces.

Come, O my Lord, come thou lover of Souls, and let me not languiſh in theſe longings any more. Come, and leave no place for any fears, that I ſhall loſe thy company. Come, and give me the full ſatisfaction I promiſe my ſelf, in thy ſweeteſt ſociety. I am content to ſuffer one pain, that I may thereby put an end to all. Death is no longer dreadful to me; when I think it will bring me ſomething nearer to thee. Thou maieſt rend my ſoul when thou pleaſeſt from this fleſh; that it may be torn no more, as it uſes to be, when it is pulled back by other things, and would gladly follow thee.

O joyn me perfectly, most perfectly to thee; that I may love thee as much, as the most enlarged spirit is capable to love thee. Happy should I be, if I could do nothing else but love thee, and feel that thou lovest me. O hasten the day, when my time shall be divided between these two sweetest employments; of expressing my most ardent love to thee, and rejoycing in the full satisfaction of thy love to me.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Two other Reaſons why, if we love our ſelves, we muſt needs love this Appearing.

IV.

SO we ought to wiſh, if we ſeriouſly believe there will be ſuch a day, becauſe we naturally love *Life and Immortality*, which till then cannot be perfectly beſtowed on us. Our Lord indeed hath brought theſe to light, and given us an aſſured hope that none of thoſe who believe in him ſhall periſh: But as the everlaſting Life he puts us in poſſeſſion of when we depart from hence (I ſhall ſhow in the next Chapter) is not preſently compleated; ſo it is out of all queſtion that we muſt ſtay till the *laſt day* before he perform his ſo frequently repeated promiſe, of raiſing our bodys out vi. Joh. 40, 54, &c.

of the duſt, and making them incorruptible, that they may live for ever.

Which is a thing we ſo much deſire, that we are prone to pleaſe our ſelves with the meer ſhadow of it; ſtudying, when we dye, to make our memory ſurvive our aſhes. We would fain record our Names in the Legend of fame, by the performance of ſome remarkable exploit. Or by ſome memorable work, we contrive that the world may ſpeak of us, when we are gone down into ſilence. And for fear it ſhould not, we teach Marble-ſtones, and Pillars to tell what we were; and by this means we fancy, we ſhall live as long as the world ſhall laſt.

But alas! this is no better than an imaginary life; which we cannot ſecure neither: but muſt leave the World without any aſſurance of that, for which we are ſo ſolicitous, and imploy ſuch ſerious pains. No mans Name can be ſo loudly ſounded by the trumpet of fame; but it may chance that ſucceeding ages ſhall not hear the leaſt whiſper of him. Or if they do, it may fare with him as it doth with *Hercules* and *Bacchus*, who were as great Souldiers and Conquerers, it is likely, as *Alexander* and *Cæſar*, and yet now their

their notable atchievements do but ſerve to fill up the number of Fables. Epitaphs, and Eſcutchions, Books and Monuments, do all dye as well as men. Our Names in all likelihood will at laſt be buried and periſh, as well as our ſelves. For this world is the place, where death reigns and plays the Rex; not only over us, but over all the reliques that we leave behind us.

What ſhould we wiſh for then, what ſhould be the ardent deſire of all Nations, if they were believers, but the time of our Lords appearing: *when this mortality*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *ſhall be ſwallowed up of life*; and we ſhall receive from his hands Laurels and Crowns, that are incorruptible and never fade away; a Name that ſhall never dye; a Glory, that ſhall live and continue in its ſplendor, as long as God himſelf? For as this is the time wherein Death hath dominion; ſo that will be the time of aboliſhing its Kingdom, and putting an end to all its tyranny, by ſetting up Life and Immortality in its ſtead.

O welcome time, ſayes the heavenly minded ſoul, *when this great devourer of the world ſhall have nothing left to feed upon; unleſs it be the Grave, which ſhall dye eternally, and never be heard of more! O what a joyful name is this of Life, and of life for evermore! How ſweetly doth, even the word*, IMMORTALITY *ſound, in this land of death and deſtruction? What is it that makes our hearts ſo cold, and to feel ſo few deſires to ſee the Prince of Life appear? To ſee Him, who ſhall raiſe up that in glory and power, which was put into the earth in diſhonour and weakneſs; and ſhall turn this natural, this corruptible body, into one that is ſpiritual and incorruptible?*

Are we afraid this world will be burnt up by the brightneſs of his appearing? Do we pity our Palaces and coſtly Furniture, which we think are then in danger to be conſumed? Are we concerned for our Money and Jewels, our ancient Demeſn and places of pleaſure, our Pictures and Statues, with ſuch like things, which we ſtrive to perpetuate to all poſterity? Will all theſe, do we fear, be in a flame? and ſerve for no

other

other uſe than thoſe great Fires do, where-with we honour the Coronations and Victories of Kings, or any other ſuch like noble ſpectacle?

Let it be ſo; I ſee no cauſe to be troubled at it: when I remember that together with theſe, the Graves and the Sepulchres, the Tombs and ſuch like Monuments of Deaths conqueſts, the Vaults and the Charnel-houſes, with every other Trophee that ſin hath erected, ſhall be caſt into this huge Bonfire; which ſhall be made, we conceive, by the conflagration of this Globe of earth, to adorn our Saviours Triumph.

Why ſhould we dread, O my ſoul, to behold ſuch Flames as theſe? Let us look and fix our eyes upon them as moſt cheerful blazes. Let us warm our hearts, at the very thoughts of ſuch fires. And though they ſhould prove to be this worlds Funeral; yet let us rejoyce in them as accompanying our moſt happy Reſurrection.

O Death, I fear none of thy threatnings. O Grave, I am not aſtoniſht any longer at thy darkneſs. I ſee the fatal day is coming, which ſhall put an end to both your dominions. And till then, I yield my ſelf your ſubject, and intend not to ſtruggle againſt your power. But I fear it not: becauſe, unleſs

less you can prevent that day, or prevail against my Saviour, as well as over me, I am safe enough.

It is not much you can rob me of at present. The pleasures we enjoy in this crazy body, are not so considerable, that we should mightily lament the loss of them. Our Friends indeed have taken such fast hold of our hearts, that we cannot easily consent to leave them: but setting them aside, what is it that you can take away, which I am loth to part withal? And they, I consider, shall at last triumph together with me, over your now prevailing power. We shall only part, to meet again, and see you swallowed up in victory. And we shall be revived in bodies far more glorious, with hearts full of more vigorous love. In which we shall live with endless pleasure; without any fears of being severed any more. Amen.

I wish thou wouldst come, O blessed Jesus, and carry us all to a place of secure and peaceful love: where we might sit together, and chaunt thy praises for ever.

V.

We cannot but be inclined to such meditations, and bear an affectionate love to our

our Lords appearing, unleſs we be in love with Sin; which at that time (we ſhould further conſider) ſhall quite ceaſe, and not have ſo much as the leaſt ſhadow of it remaining.

Are not all pious ſouls very much afflicted, to think that God is every where ſo much dishonoured? Is it not exceeding grievous to them, to ſee his moſt high authority daily affronted, without any remedy for it? and that Image he hath placed of himſelf in man, after ſuch a lamentable manner, and without any remorſe, continually mangled? Nay, is it not a conſiderable part of their trouble, that they are afraid leſt, through the violence of temptations, or the weakneſs of their nature, or the inadvertency of their minds, by ſudden ſurpriſes, they ſhould add to the number of thoſe diſorders which are already ſo prodigiouſly increaſed? What is there then, for which they can more reaſonably wiſh; than that they may be delivered out of this fearful danger, and the Heavens may be ſecured from this rude violence?

A bleſſing to be deſired and expected not only upon their own account, but in reſpect to our bleſſed Lord and Saviour

our alſo, who is now, we read, in the moſt holy place above, there preſenting himſelf, with his pretious blood, before God for us. Which he muſt continue to do, till the time of his Appearing be fulfilled; when he ſhall come out from thence *without ſin* (ix. Heb. 28.) as having diſcharged all his Office in that heavenly Sanctuary. While he ſtayes therefore in that place, the care of all the people lies upon his ſhoulders: there is a daily charge he is to attend; that he may cure and expiate the ſins of men. This is the conſtant imployment of his high and Royal Prieſthood, and it cannot ceaſe till he come out again, on the day of his appearing: which, it is manifeſt, will free both him and the world from this great burden of tranſgreſſions.

Then there ſhall never be any more objects of his pity and compaſſion. He ſhall have no ſenſe then of our infirmities; no feeling of our pains, our grief and our anguiſh. Then he will ceaſe to be afflicted with us, and be put to no further trouble about us: But be all delight, all joy, all complacence and pleaſure in his members; who will be ſo well, as to call for none of his care any more for ever. And

And ſhall not the thoughts of this bleſſed time be our joy and pleaſure too? We have very much reaſon to ſuſpect our faith, if we can find ſuch contentment here, that we would not have it make too much haſte: For nothing is ſo ſad to pious hearts, as that it ſeems to be ſo far off, and comes ſo ſlowly to them. They groan and ſigh here under many weakneſſes. They complain moſt heavily, and mourn under the weight of many imperfections. From which they would fain be delivered; that they may turn their ſighs, into ſongs of praiſe to the triumphant Captain of their ſalvation, Chriſt Jeſus.

Nay, ſhould we ſuppoſe there will be a time, before the end of all things, when righteouſneſs will more univerſally prevail; which is the beſt ſenſe that can be made of the Saints reigning upon the earth with Chriſt a thouſand years (which ſome are perſwaded is ſtill to come:) Yet ſuch and ſo many are the weakneſſes that will hang upon us, and ſo great are the dangers to which they will make us ſubject, while we dwell in theſe earthly Tabernacles, that Good men would but be the more deſirous our Lord would

appear,

appear, to perfect what they ſaw ſo happily begun, in their intire reformation to a better ſtate.

O what a long time am I like to ſtay, cries ſuch an oppreſſed ſoul, *before I be eaſed of this burden, which is too heavy for me? How many days and years more muſt I ſpend, under the load and preſſure of this fleſh and blood? Give me patience, Dear Lord, to wait for that day, which ſhall free me from it. Make me able to ſupport my ſelf in contentment, with the hopes that the time of releaſe, at laſt will come.*

I am ſo far from being unwilling that thou ſhouldeſt come; that I beſeech thee to make me willing to ſtay, till thou canſt come. Only give me leave ſometime to ſigh and ſay, when wilt thou come! O when wilt thou come! Suffer me to wiſh moſt paſſionately that thou wouldeſt appear: Be not angry with me, if in the agonies of my ſoul I deſire thou wouldſt haſte thine appearing.

And in the mean time, increaſe my belief that thou, O compaſſionate Saviour, pitieſt my weakneſſes, and art not inſenſible of all my miſeries: that ſo I may more comfortably hope, thou wilt come and eaſe me

and

and thy ſelf, both together. Bear up my ſinking ſpirit, till I be ſo happy: and by thine almighty power ſupport me under the weight of all the fears and all the doubts that are apt to trouble me. And let not the dulneſs of my mind, or the heavineſs of my heart, the diſtraction of my thoughts, or the deadneſs of my affections in thy moſt delightſome ſervice, utterly deject me. But raiſe me up with a chearful hope of thy ſalvation, to a pitch of joy and gladneſs, under all the burdens that oppreſs me.

I am forced indeed to ſigh, when I think of the many temptations to which, on every ſide, I am expoſed. And more ſad it is to think that they, at any time, have ſhaken, though not overthrown me. O the childiſh follies of a mind, which doth ſo much as liſten to the treacherous allurements, which would ſteal away my heart from its happineſs! O the intolerable weakneſs of an heart, which doth ſo much as waver in its reſolved choice, of ſo reaſonable a ſervice as that of thine, wherein I am engaged!

Pardon me, Good Lord, that I call it intolerable. For I know I ought to bear it in hope of greater ſtrength and of eternal ſettlement: and that I ought to rejoyce I am not overcome, by all the temptation, where-

with

with I have been assaulted. Blessed be thy Almighty Grace, that I have stood hitherto so stedfast, so unmoveable in my duty: and that I have thy word for it, thou wilt never leave me nor forsake me. It is only my love to thee, which makes me complain, though not of the inconstancy yet, of the weakness of my love. The coldness of my affections, the listlessness of my devotions, my aptness to be tired and soon weary of the divinest pleasure and satisfaction, the unevenness of my temper, the sudden discomposures I feel in my spirit, are the things that often trouble me.

But I ought to remember that I am now in a body full of disorders: and that my life is a warfare which I ought patiently to accomplish. And I have great reason to bless thy name, O thou most glorious Conqueror of the Devil and sin, by whose gracious aids, my will standeth firm, and doth not yield or in the least consent to displease thy Majesty. By thy power I have and shall do valiantly. Thou shalt still tread down all mine enemies. My soul shall make her boast in thee, O Lord, and be glad in thy salvation. For I am continually with thee: who hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,

ſel, and afterward receive me to glory.

Thus will I always hope in thee, if thou wilt but be pleaſed mercifully to bear with my incurable infirmities; to relieve my fainting ſpirit in this tedious pilgrimage; and to permit me to ſigh ſometime and ſay, O when will this long conteſt be ended! when will this war which my paſſions raiſe in my breaſt be concluded; and ſuffer me to live in tranquillity and enjoy the ſweeteſt pleaſures of perfect peace! Yea when ſhall all thine enemies throughout the world be diſarmed! and there be no more rebellions againſt thy moſt ſacred Authority and thy ſoveraign will!

O come ſweet Jeſus, come, thou Lord of peace; get thy ſelf and us the Victory: that we may be more than Conquerors, and triumph in thy praiſe. Come, and bring this troubled ſpirit into thy ſerene and undiſturbed regions above. Come, and give it the wings of an Angel, that I may flee away and be at reſt. That I may flee away from all the follies, and from all the ſorrows of this ſinful life; and be at reſt with thee, my Deareſt Lord.

At reſt in that peaceful place, in that Paradiſe above; where is no dangerous Fruit to invite, no temping Eve *to ſolicite,*

no ſubtile Serpent to deceive: But we ſhall all live like ſo many Gods indeed, perfectly wiſe and perfectly good; inviting one another only to praiſe and love thee, with our united ſtrength. Thee, who art the firſt and the laſt; the beginner of our Faith, and the finiſher of our Hope; the Guide of our Pilgrimage, through the troubleſom wilderneſs of this World; and the eternal reſt of our wearied ſouls in that heavenly country, which overflows with pleaſures for evermore.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Two Reaſons more, to induce us to raiſe our thoughts and affections to the Appearing of our Lord.

VI.

AND the very firſt ſtep we ſhall take towards our heavenly Reſt, will be ſo ſurprizing, and advance us ſo far above our preſent imperfections; that it muſt needs, if we ſeriouſly conſider it, make this Appearing of his extreamly deſireable. Becauſe all good men ſhall have the favour then to be ſnatcht from this earth, and carried up into the air, to meet our Lord Jeſus there; when he appears in his glory.

And who is there that underſtands himſelf, who would not wiſh to be thus tranſlated; rather than to ſtay here,

though it were to ſee our Lord come to reign with his Saints a thouſand years upon the earth? Which Judaical conceit (as St. *Hierom* truly calls it) was embraced by many great men in ancient times, as a piece of the moſt Orthodox faith. So *Juſtin Martyr* eſteemed it; and *Irenæus*, with many others, were very zealous for it. And if they had thought more of ſpiritual delights, which the Saints ſhould have in that Sabbath (as they termed it) by the preſence of our Lord, St. *Auſtin*, * for his part, acknowledges it would have been a tolerable opinion, to which he himſelf was ſometimes inclined. For all good men, as I ſaid before, would be glad to ſee righteouſneſs planted more univerſally in the earth, and prevailing over vice and wickedneſs, before the diſſolution of all things. And yet, even then (ſhould we ſuppoſe them to be ſo happy here) they would be far more glad to behold our Lord appear in his glory to take them quite away from this earth. Where, as long as they continue, they muſt needs be dull and heavy, cloudy and dark, and enjoy but little of him; till they quit this groſs body of fleſh and blood, and go up into

* L. xx. *de liv. Dei*, c. 7.

to a purer ſtate of light, and vigorous life.

Which St. *Paul* hath given us hope we ſhall enter into, at the appearing of our Lord. Who will deſcend from Heaven with great acclamations (you heard before from 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 16.) to raiſe the dead and judge the World. And then his Saints are not to remain any longer here, but a ſudden change being made in them (1 *Cor.* xv. 52.) both they who are then alive and all thoſe who are newly raiſed from the dead, ſhall be CAUGHT UP TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR, v. 17. There he will ſhew himſelf; and not upon this earth. Thither they ſhall be carried up unto him; and not he come down hither unto them.

And if you well obſerve it, the Apoſtle teaches you to believe, that this aſcent of the Saints unto him, will bein a very glorious manner. Juſt as he comes from Heaven, ſhall they go up thither; For St. *Paul* ſaith we ſhall be caught up IN THE CLOUDS, as ſo many triumphal chariots ſent to fetch us from this earth and tranſport us to himſelf. Who when he ſtood before his Judges to re-

ceive his ſentence from them, thus deſcribes his own coming to judge them, xxvj. Matth. 64. *Hereafter ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the* CLOUDS *of Heaven.* Though now, that is, I am arraigned and condemned by you, as if I were the vileſt of men; you ſhall one day ſee that I am the Son of God, by whom you ſhall be judged; for with amazement you ſhall behold me clothed with Divine Majeſty, and coming as the Vicegerent of the ſupreme Lord of all to call you to an account. For every one knows that *clouds* are called the *Chariot of God*, civ. Pſal. 3. and therefore *his coming in the* CLOUDS *of Heaven* can ſignifie nothing elſe but his appearing in the glory and with the Authority of his Father; as Lord of the world, that hath conquered all his enemies, and is come to pronounce the ſentence of God upon them.

In ſuch a ſplendid manner, with the like pomp and ſtate, ſhall we be carried up to him; as ſo many Princes going to wait upon him, and to receive the honour he will delight to confer upon us in the ſight of all the world. Nay, it will be part of our honour to be conveighed

to

to him, just as *Elias*, yea he himself ascended into Heaven. For a *Chariot of Fire* appeared for the transportation of the one (2 *Kings* ij. 11.) and *a cloud*, which is the same, received the other out of the Apostles sight, i. *Act.* 9.

O blessed Day, O happy Appearing, doth an heavenly minded Christian often think with himself, *when a sight of my Saviour will draw me up to him, to be where he is! O most glorious, most beautiful Spectacle, when his beams which fall upon me shall make me ascend from this earth, as the Vapors do before the rayes of the Sun! O the joy that will fill my heart, when I shall see those gilded Chariots sent from my Saviour, to fetch me unto himself!*

How shall I sing when I am uncooped, and let out of this Cage (wherein I am now confined) to accompany the free people of the air, in their heavenly melodies? What a pleasure will it be to look behind me, as I fly up unto Jesus, and see what a poor spot this Earth is; of which I shall then have taken my leave for ever? O how glad shall I be, that I am to return no more to a place so dull, so dark, and so full of miseries?

How happy shall I think my self, that I am gone quite away from this vile Orb; which will not seem then to my exalted soul so big as a pins-head? Nay, how joyful will it make me to find, that I am at last ascended up so high; as to have lost the sight of this little Globe, and of all the Kingdoms and Empires that it contains?

O my Gracious Lord, pardon me if I be sometime apt to think, that thou stayest too long before thou comest, to call me up unto those heavenly places. This flesh is too unweildly a load, when I think of that aerial state. It hath made me groan, ever since thou madest me believe, that thou wilt bestow a lighter garment upon my soul. Heretofore, indeed, I fancied nothing more than a body fresh and plump, a tall and proper stature, a fair face and beautiful features; and I was prone to envy those who dwelt in such fine and goodly Palaces: But ever since the time that I heard of going into the air, to meet with thee, my Lord; all the love they excite in my heart, makes such habitations seem no better than stately Prisons. I have lookt upon my self and sweetest Friends, in our most healthy estate; and sighed to think that we were in Chains and Fetters. Nay, the best of these houses, I tell

tell them, at certain ſeaſons are but painted Sepulchres; wherein the mind lies dead and buried.

It is thou therefore, O moſt bleſſed Lord, who haſt made me to wiſh ſo earneſtly for thine appearing. I owe theſe longings to the diſcovery which thou haſt made to me, of another and better world, whither thou intendeſt to tranſport me. And if I have a mind to begin my journey thither preſently, if I would fain feel my wings ſo grown that they might be able to bear me up above this earth, if my ſoul ſometimes would willingly be releaſed from theſe chains, and have the freedom to leave this fleſh, and if I wiſh withal that this fleſh may be changed, and turned into a kind of ſpiritual being; I muſt aſcribe it unto thee, who haſt begot theſe deſires in me; by telling me of a building of God eternal in the Heavens, when this earthly tabernacle is diſſolved.

Thou haſt revealed theſe things to me, that I might deſire them; and who can deſire them, and not wiſh withal that he might preſently enjoy them? Let it not diſpleaſe thee therefore, I beſeech thee again, O my Deareſt Lord; if I ſay ſometimes, I am weary of being here. Do not eſteem me impatient, if, in the agonies and pangs of

of Love, I long to come up higher, and get as near as may be to thy ſelf. Suffer me to pray thee, that theſe walls of fleſh may not long immure me, and exclude me from thy face. At leaſt open a window for my gaſping ſoul; that I may look into the purer air; and pleaſe my ſelf in the thoughts of the flight which I ſhall one day take, to ſee thee and enjoy thee in unclouded Bliſs.

VII.

But there is ſomething beyond all this, to draw our affections from all things here, and to make us love and long for the coming of our Lord: And that is, the CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, which the Apoſtle tells us, in this very place, ſhall then be given to all thoſe, who are thus piouſly diſpoſed for it.

I cannot tell you how much is contained in theſe two words; unleſs I ſhould make another Treatiſe little leſs than this. For a CROWN denotes the higheſt degree of honour; and RIGHTEOUSNESS ſignifies, in the holy language, not only freedom from all pain and puniſhment, but the enjoyment of the

the greateſt felicity, that the moſt bounteous goodneſs of God will beſtow upon his faithful ſervants. No leſs than ſuch a glory and happineſs, as our Lord himſelf hath received, for a reward of his labours. For *we ſee Jeſus* (ſaith the Apoſtle ij. Heb. 9.) *who was made a little lower than the Angels, for the ſuffering of death,* CROWNED *with glory and honour.* So St. *John* ſaw him in a viſion (as he tells us xiv. *Rev.* 14.) ſitting upon a *white* (*i. e.* a bright and ſhining) *cloud, having on his head* A GOLDEN CROWN.

And thus our Lord hath cauſed it to be proclaimed, in the Goſpel of his Grace, it ſhall be done to all thoſe whom God delights to honour. He hath ſhown in our bleſſed Saviour, what he will beſtow upon his conſtant followers. And in what he hath done for him, he hath ſhown alſo that *he is upright, and that there is no unrighteouſneſs in him.* They may depend upon his word, and be confident he will not fail their expectation; but crown their faith and patience with immortal glory.

I ſay their patience, becauſe he will have them wait long, and ſtay a great while

while before they receive this Crown; which cannot be ſet upon their heads till the day of his Appearing. He will take up all pious Souls indeed into a ſtate of joy and bliſs, ſurpaſſing all that we can now conceive, as ſoon as they depart this life; but the perfection of it they muſt wait for till he have gathered the whole body of the faithful to him, that he may crown them all together. So the Ancients underſtand that place, xi. *Heb.* 39, 40. as may be ſeen in *Theodoret*, *Oecumenius*, *Theophylact* and others. And ſo the laſt named Writer diſcourſes at large upon the xxiij. *Luke* 43. according to the doctrine of St. *Chryſoſtom*, whom he conſtantly follows. Who pronounces that the ſoul lies ἀστεφάνωτος. * *uncrowned*, till the reſurrection of the dead; which is the time when we ſhall all receive according to what we have done in the body, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Which was not his opinion alone, or the ſenſe of ſome few others; but the current doctrine of the ancient Fathers. Who look upon that inviſible place and ſtate, wherein the ſouls of good men are before the Reſurrection, as ſo much inferiour to that wherein they ſhall be afterward,

* In 1 Cor. xv. 19.

ward, that they have beſtowed very different names upon them; expreſſing the imperfect, though very happy, condition in which we muſt remain, till our Lord will be pleaſed to appear for our conſummation. It will not be amiſs to mention the deſcriptions they give of both.

The place and ſtate before the Reſurrection they call, *Paradiſe*; *the Boſom of* Abraham; the *feaſt of the Patriarchs*; the *outward Altar*; *below the Altar*; the *Porch of the Sanctuary*; the *Courts of the Lord*: *the Cuſtody*, and *the ſtorehouſe of Souls*; *ſecret receptacles*; the *hidden ſeats or Tabernacles of the godly*; *convenient* or *due places*; *places meet for them, or worthy of them*; *the place of refreſhment, of Light, of Peace*; *a portion of the ſpiritual Reſt*; *the reſt of ſecurity*; *a certain retiring place of everlaſting Reſt*; *the port of eternal ſecurity*; *the bright*, *the fragrant*, *the royal Tabernacles*; *the earneſt or pledge of the Kingdom*; *the White rayment*; *a Chamber in the Palace Royal*; *an Habitation with God*; *the* Aſylum *or place of refuge*; with other ſuch like names; which are ſo obvious, that none can fail to be acquainted with them, who read the ancient Doctors of our Religion. Among whom St. *Ambroſe* hath adven-

adventured to give us a very particular account of this ſtate: which I ſhall ſet down, becauſe it will be very pleaſing to thoſe, who are deſirous of ſome diſtinct conception of the happineſs we hope for, before the Reſurrection, in the celeſtial Tabernacles.

L. de Bono Mortis, c. xj.

"Where the joy of juſt ſouls, ſaith he, "will be diſpoſed *per Ordines quoſdam*, "by certain orders, ranks or degrees. "*Firſt*, there is the joy that they have "overcome the fleſh; and were not "crooked by its inticements. *Secondly*, "that at the rate of their induſtry and "innocence, they enjoy ſecurity, and are "not intangled like the ſouls of the "wicked in errors and perturbations; "and are neither tortured with the me- "mory of their vices, nor vexed with "the rage of ſolicitude and cares. *Third-* "*ly*, that they are ſupported with the "Divine Teſtimony, of their having ob- "ſerved the Law; ſo that they are not "in fear of the uncertain event of their "deeds in the laſt judgement. *Fourthly*, "becauſe they begin to underſtand their "Reſt and Eaſe, and to foreſee their fu- "ture glory; and pleaſing themſelves "with that conſolation in their dwelling "places,

" places, they live at eaſe, with great " tranquillity, invironed with the guards " of Angels. And the *Fifth Order* or " Rank, hath the ſweetneſs of a moſt " plentiful exultation or triumph, that " they are eſcaped, out of the priſon of " this corruptible body, into light and " liberty; and poſſeſs the promiſed inhe- " ritance. For there is an order of the " reſt, as there is of the reſurrection. " We ſhall all riſe, *but every one in his* " *order. Chriſt the firſt-fruits, then they* " *that are Chriſts, who believe his coming:* " *and then is the end.* There ſhall be " therefore a different order of dignity " and glory, as there will be an order " of deſerts. So that in the *ſixth Order*, " their Countenance will begin to ſhine " as the Sun, and to be compared to the " lights of the ſtars: but is ſuch a bright- " neſs as cannot decay. And the *ſeventh* " *Order* will be, that they may exult with " confidence and full aſſurance, and con- " fide without any doubting, and rejoyce " without trembling; making haſte to " ſee his Countenance, to whom they " have devoted the Obedience of a moſt " diligent ſervice. From whence, by the " remembrance of an innocent Conſci- " ence,

" ence, they may preſume a glorious re-
" ward of a ſmall labour: which they be-
" ginning to receive, ſhall know that the
" ſufferings of this preſent time are un-
" worthy that ſo great a glory of an eter-
" nal recompenſe ſhould be compared
" with them.

This is the Order wherein he places juſt ſouls before our Lord come to bring them into his heavenly Kingdom. And ſome body under the name of St. *Auſtin* hath more briefly expreſſed it thus.* " We believe that when our ſoul is freed " from the bonds of the fleſh, if we have " lived well and uprightly before God, " the Quire of Angels will preſently come " to meet us, and troops of all the Saints " will run into our embraces; and bring " us to ſupplicate the true Judge. Then " peace will incompaſs us, and deep ſecu-" rity. We ſhall fear no more the fiery " darts of the Devil, nor any other ene-" my that deſires to caſt our ſouls into " danger. Not ſword, not fire, not the " cruel face of the Tormentor, not hun-" ger, not thirſt, nor any ſickneſs. The " fleſh ſhall no longer be contrary to the " ſpirit; nor ſhall we fear any danger: " but having caſt off the burden of the " fleſh,

* *L. de ſalutaribus Documentis, c.* xl. *Tom.* 4.

" fleſh, the holy Spirit, (to whom we had " before given a manſion in our body) " will give us a manſion in Heaven. And " ſo we ſhall joyfully and gladly expect " the day of judgement; in which the " ſouls of all men ſhall receive rewards " according to their deeds.

Now that place and ſtate into which we ſhall be admitted then, they call *the Higheſt Heaven*; *the Inner Altar*; *above the Altar*; *the Houſe of God*; *the Seat of Chriſt*; *the Celeſtial Kingdom*; *the Heavenly Inheritance*; *the goods of the Kingdom*; *the conſummation of glory*; *the reward of immortality*; *the diſtribution of royal donatives*; *perfect joy*; *the expected reward*; *the end of all good*; *the intire reward of deſerts*; *the time of Crowns*; *the kingdom of fruition*; *the perfect participation of good things*; with other names of the like import; which ſignifie ſomething much beyond what we ſhall enjoy before our Lords appearing.

I ſhall conclude what they ſay of both theſe ſtates, with the words of St. *Auſtin*, in his expoſition upon St. *John*. " All " ſouls, ſaith he, when they go out of " this world, have their different re- " ceptions: the good have joy, and the evil Tract. xlix.

" have torment. But when there ſhall
" be a reſurrection, the joy of the good
" ſhall be more ample, and the torment
" of the bad more grievous. The holy
" Patriarchs are received in peace, and
" ſo are Prophets, Apoſtles, Martyrs,
" and the good Faithful: but all theſe are
" ſtill in the end to receive that which
" God hath promiſed. For even the re-
" ſurrection of the fleſh is promiſed, the
" conſumption of death, and eternal life
" with the Angels. This we ſhall all re-
" ceive together: But as for the Reſt
" which is given preſently after death,
" every man receives it, if he be worthy
" of it, when he departs from hence.
" The Patriarchs received it firſt, after-
" wards the Prophets, and more lately
" the Apoſtles, and ſtill more lately the
" holy Martyrs, and every day the good
" Faithful, *&c.*

And with theſe more ancient words of *Irenæus*; who diſcourſes in this manner.
" Since our Lord went away in the midſt
" of the ſhadow of death, to that place
" where the ſouls of the dead are; and
" afterward was raiſed corporally; and
" after his reſurrection was taken up into
" Heaven; It is manifeſt that the ſouls
" of

"of his Diſciples alſo (for whom the "Lord wrought theſe things) ſhall go "into the inviſible place appointed to "them by God; and ſhall ſtay there till "the Reſurrection, expecting the Reſur-"rection: Afterward receiving their bo-"dies, and riſing again perfectly, that is "corporally, as our Lord alſo roſe again, "ſo they ſhall come to the ſight of God. "For no Diſciple is above his Maſter; "but every one that is perfect ſhall be "as his Maſter. As our Lord therefore "did not ſtraightway, flying from hence, "depart to Heaven, but expecting the "time of the Reſurrection appointed of "the Father (which was fore-ſignified "in *Jonas*) after three days riſing again, "was taken up into Heaven: even ſo we "alſo ought to wait with patience the "time appointed by God for our Reſur-"rection, fore-told by the Prophets; and "ſo riſing again be taken up, as many of "us as the Lord ſhall account worthy "of it.

And whoſoever ſhall be thought worthy of that world (as our Lord ſpeaks) and of the reſurrection of the dead, they will be filled, no doubt, with inconceivable joy, to meet ſo many pious ſouls,

and ſo many Friends, who will be all aſſembled at that time to receive the reward, they have ſo long waited for. *For if all the Faithful be one body* (as St. *Chryſoſtom*, or the Author of the Commentary on the *Hebrews* *, under his name, ſpeaks) *it will be a greater pleaſure to this body to be Crowned all together, than if it ſhould be done by parts. For the righteous even in this are admirable, that they rejoyce in the good of their Brethren, as well as their own: and therefore this will be according to their hearts deſire, that they ſhall be Crowned with their fellow members; For it is a great ſatisfaction to be glorified together.*

In xi. Heb. 40.

Of which ſince we have ſo ſure an expectation, "and the juſt (as St. *Ambroſe* "ſpeaks in the place fore-mentioned) "have ſuch a recompenſe, that they ſhall "ſee the face of God, and behold that "light which inlightens every man; what "ſhould we all do from hence forward, "but, as he ſays, put on this reſolution, "and ſtudy that our ſouls may draw near "to God, that our prayer may draw near "to him, that our deſire may cleave un-"to him, and we may never be ſepara-"ted from him? Even while we remain "here,

"here, let us be fast knit to God, by "meditating, by reading, by seeking, and "endeavour to know him as we are able. "For we know here but in part; because "all things here are imperfect, there in "their perfection. Here we are little "Children; there we shall be strong men. "We see here, saith St. *Paul*, as in a glass "darkly; but there face to face. There "with open face we shall behold the "glory of God; which here our souls "being involved in flesh and blood, and "sullied with their spots, cannot behold "sincere. For who, saith he, can see my "face and live? How should we? since "our eyes cannot endure so much as the "rayes of the Sun; which would put "them out if we should fix them on so "great a light. How can we behold "then the shining Countenance of our "Creator, while we are wrapt up in the "rags of this flesh?

We must stay for so glorious a sight till that happy day, when we shall be unclothed, or rather clothed upon, with the garments of celestial light. That's the time and not till then, when he designs to do us the great honour, of setting the Crown of righteousness upon our

heads. Now is the time of toils (as he ſpeaks in another place) of agonies, of combates, of conflicts, of ſtrife for Victory: then is the time of refreſhments, of crowns, of retributions, of rewards, of reſurrection, and of the reſtitution of all things. Which ought to make all ſerious Believers, look for that day with earneſt longings; and lift up their heads above this viſible world, as men deſirous to receive this glorious Diadem. In compariſon with which, the moſt goodly fillets that ever bound any Imperial brow, are not worthy ſo much as to be named.

O that glorious Crown, purer than the fineſt Gold! (is a pious heart inclined to ſay) *that Crown of righteouſneſs and of life! which my Lord hath ſo dearly purchaſed for me, with his pretious blood! how do I covet it; how deſirous am I, how do I long to be partaker of it? My head beats and akes, and cannot be at reſt, till this Crown, by his royal hand, be ſet upon it. It is in pain, till in ſtead of theſe clouds wherewith it is ſurrounded; it be incompaſſed in a circle of purer and brighter thoughts. It*

is

is ſorely oppreſſed till theſe vain dreams, and frivolous imaginations, which gather about it, fly away; and it be infolded in a wreath of nobler contemplations. O how heavy is it, till this giddineſs of mind, wherein I am whirl'd, be exchanged for a ſteady Orb of light; wherein my ſoul, I hope, one day ſhall be unmoveably centred?

I long to have theſe aſhes blown away; wherein the ſparks of divinity lye raked up, in our eclipſed nature. O when will that ſweet breath come, that ſhall make them ſhine; and ſet them free to fly to their element above? When ſhall thoſe flaſhes of light, which ſometime break forth, be blown up into a clearer and more conſtant flame? Can one believe, and not wiſh to find himſelf in the Houſe of God, in the midſt of the heavenly Miniſters, ſurrounded with ſuch glorious ſights, as eye never ſaw, nor heart can poſſibly conceive? I am not able to refrain from ſaying, O when ſhall I ſee my mind incircled in the rays of divine light? When ſhall it beam forth in ſuch heavenly thoughts, and make my heart burn and ſparkle with ſuch ardors of love; that they ſhall caſt a glory round about my head?

This is the Crown, which my ſoul deſires to wear. This is the Garland I would win; the glorious Diadem, wherewith my reſtleſs mind would be adorned. It is not Silver and Gold, Pearls and Pretious-ſtones, or any ſuch like things (whoſe rich names I borrow to expreſs my preſent thoughts) that I wiſh and deſire: But the brightneſs of the knowledge of God to fold it ſelf about my head; and that I may ſit invironed in a Ring of admiring thoughts; of pure, undiſturbed, never ending thoughts of thee, and of thy marvellous kindneſs towards me.

Which happineſs till my mind enjoy, the pain that I feel will not ceaſe; unleſs thou, Lord, wilt be pleaſed to aſſwage it, by comfortable hopes and joyful expectations of ſuch an eternal weight of glory. Even when I have left this world, and am come to thoſe lightſome Tabernacles, which thou haſt prepared for thoſe that truly love thee; I ſhall long to know more of thee; and deſire ſtill to be nearer to thee; and look to ſee thee come out of thy Royal Palace, to Crown the faith and hope of thine obedient Servants.

And in the mean time may I be ſo happy, as to be diſpoſed into the Order of thoſe, who perpetually talk of thy love, and ſing thy

thy praiſes, and rejoyce with perfect confidence and full aſſurance, and are ever lifting up their heads to ſee thee, and often ſaying one to another, when will he come, when will he appear in the higheſt and moſt exalted glory? O bleſſed day! when mixed with the Quire of Saints, we ſhall fly in their company to meet the Spouſe; and ſay every one of us, I have found him, whom my ſoul loveth; *I have found him, the ſight of whom I ſhall loſe no more; but indued with the glory of immortality and the ſplendor of incorruption, ſhall live for ever with the Lord.*

O happy ſtate of Saints; when they ſhall have fleſh without earth, a body without ſenſe of pain, a ſoul without fear, life without death, age without time, light without night, and bleſſedneſs without end! Chriſtianity will never let us be ſatiated with theſe delectable thoughts. This is its refreſhment, this is its delight, this is its pleaſure and joy; in mind and heart to go to the Seat of God; and there to take its place, and ſeize on its ſhare in that Seat; not by its own preſumption, but by the promiſe of God. Who hath already exalted our Lord Chriſt in that bleſſed place; and by our relation to him, we challenge

Ex L. de Vivo perfecto ſub nom. S. Hieron. Tom. iv.

challenge a right to be ſo happy. For he is the Head of his body the Church; He is the head of all principality and power: From whom all the body, by joynts and
ii. Col. 19. *bands, having nouriſhment miniſtred, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Three Conſiderations more to draw our Affections to the Appearing of our Lord.

VIII.

I Have already ſaid ſo much of the Happineſs we expect, when our Lord ſhall come again, that here I might put an end to this Diſcourſe: if it would not be more profitable diſtinctly to conſider, that after we are caught up from this earth to meet the Lord in the air, and he hath done us honour in the ſight of all the world; we ſhall all (as I have already ſuggeſted) march with him unto Heaven, in goodly array, and comely order, with thoſe Crowns of Glory, which he hath given us, upon our heads. This ſhould mightily move us to love his Appearing; that we ſhall then

then appear together with him: and not abide in the Air, though incompaſſed with ſo much glory; but be carried up with him, far higher, into the pureſt ſky.

When our minds are made all Light, we ſhall ſee a vaſt way before us; and behold the Palace where God himſelf dwells, inviting us unto it. Thither our Lord will have us attend upon him and accompany him; when he hath finiſhed the judgement of the great day. Where the Holy Books inform us we ſhall be ſumptuouſly treated; with no leſs kindneſs, magnificence and joy, than a King, we may conceive, would entertain his only Son, when he brought home his beloved Bride, whom he had long ago eſpouſed to himſelf: For whoſe reception he prepares the moſt Royal Supper, a glorious Marriage-Feaſt, to welcome her unto his houſe.

And will not this make every faithful ſoul, who is a holy member of that Body the Church, whom our Lord is pleaſed to own for his Bride, ſtill more deſirous, if not impatient, of the coming of the celeſtial Bridegroom; to perfect his love, and complete the promiſes wherein

in he ſtands ingaged, by the gracious covenant he made with us when he contracted us to himſelf? What is there that we all ſo much covet as the exceſs of joy, and the higheſt pitch of pleaſure? And where are theſe to be found in ſo much purity, in ſuch fulneſs, and ſo perpetual, as in his moſt bleſſed Preſence? Which ſhould force us to burſt out with the greateſt earneſtneſs, when we think of that Heavenly Feaſt which he hath prepared for us, into ſuch expreſſions as thoſe of *David.*

As the Hart panteth after the waterbrooks, ſo panteth my ſoul, after thee, O God. My ſoul thirſteth for God, even the living God; O when ſhall I come and appear before God? *I have ſmall ſatisfaction, alas! in theſe dull, and ſhort delights, which I find on earth. What taſte is there in this green traſh? And there is little other fruit that grows in the garden of this world, but what is ſowre and harſh, and ſets my teeth on edge. It is too far from thy beams, to bring forth any thing very ſweet. Nothing can be ripened at this diſtance from thee, to ſatisfie a ſoul*

and

and yeild it all the contentment it desires.

Bring me therefore into thy Paradise above, O conduct me into thy Eden, *the Garden of thy delights. Lead me to those fruits, which are brought to maturity by the constant presence of the Sun of righteousness. Let me feast on those pleasures, which are all pleasure: and enter into the joy, which is fulness of joy for evermore.*

And till thou thinkest me meet for such entertainments; may it please thy love, but to give me some tasts of their incomparable sweetness! May I relish no joys so much as those! May I always have the remembrance of them fresh upon my soul! And may I be so happy as to be preserved, by the savour of them, from the sinful allurements of all other pleasures!

Hence, hence all you beggerly delights, which would have me forget my happiness. Stand aside you Images of true joy, and hinder not my prospect of that heavenly Paradise. Lend me your help, or else get you gone, and trouble me no more. Assist my benighted thoughts, and represent that blissful place to them; or else I desire not your company. I have eaten of all your dainties; but still am empty and void of satisfaction. I know what you have to say, the very

very utmoſt you can offer me; therefore follow me with no further importunities: For my heart is ſet on that fair, that delicious place, where the Great Lord keeps his Court, and entertains his Friends with endleſs pleaſures.

O holy City of God, what glorious things are ſpoken of thee! How free, how ſprightly, and how full of joy, are all thy happy Inhabitants! What heart is there, that is ſo dull as not to long to dwell in that bleſſed place; where every head wears a Crown of Life, and every hand carries a Palm of Victory? Where every eye overflows with joy, and every tongue with Pſalms of praiſe? Where light ſhines in every face; and love ſmiles in every Countenance? Where every heart is perfectly ſatisfied, in the fulneſs of its own bliſs: and ſatisfied again with the pleaſure it hath, to ſee the felicity of others?

It is too much trouble to me that I am not there; O let me not loſe the thought of it too! I ſigh to think that I ſtand at ſuch a diſtance from my Fathers Houſe; and ſhall I ſuffer a further remove, by turning away my eyes from thence? Go, O my ſoul, go thither in thy thoughts and daily meditations. Send a thouſand wiſhes before thee thither; to tell thy Lord that thou art coming to him.

Say,

Say, whom have I in Heaven but thee; who wenteſt thither to open it to all thy faithful Followers? What have I on Earth, but my hope by following thee, to arrive at laſt where thou art gone before me? Whither ſhould I look, but unto Heaven; now that thou, my Deareſt Lord, art aſcended thither, to prepare a place for me? A place of reſt, and ſecure peace; a place of joy, and conſtant enjoyment; a place from whence I am loth my thoughts or my heart ſhould deſcend, to return to this poor earth again: for there they grow ſo dull, that it is hard to lift them up, to look to thee.

O keep them with thee, keep them with thee; thou King of Heaven! Settle and fix them there, where I my ſelf expect to be; where thou alſo expecteſt me; where they ſhall find eaſe for every grief, and joy in the midſt of the greateſt tribulation. O fix them unmoveably in this quiet place, this eternal Reſt. And when they muſt attend the affairs of this lower life, may they only look, not come, down to them; and ſtill remain and ſtay with thee.

IX. And

IX.

And when theſe things ſhall be fulfilled, the Apoſtle tells us, in the place before named (1 *Theſſ.* iv. 17.) that we ſhall be ALWAYS WITH THE LORD: who paſſed his promiſe to his Diſciples a little before he left the world, that he would *come again, and receive them to himſelf, that where he is, there they may be alſo*, xiv. John 3. Of which promiſe he was ſo mindful after he went to Heaven, that he further informs St. *Paul* (who ſpake this, *by the word of the Lord*) that he will not part with us, when he hath conducted us to his Fathers houſe; but keep us *ever* with him there; in joys and pleaſures that never fade away.

A condition which we cannot but love and paſſionately long for, if we have any love for him or for our ſelves. For there are none of our enjoyments here, but muſt be frequently intermitted, and are too often interrupted: even the enjoyment of our bleſſed Lord himſelf, and the ſenſe he gives us of celeſtial things, we find, to our ſorrow, ſuffers this incon-

venience. Neither are we diverted from them only by the troubles of this life, or the violence of other worldly temptations, which preſs too boldly and rudely upon us: but by the moſt neceſſary occaſions, and the moſt innocent fruitions; to which nature not only inclines us, but requires our frequent attendance.

Of how much of our time doth ſleep poſſeſs it ſelf, though we deſire never ſo earneſtly to continue awake? How little do we live in the account of reaſon; if we do but remember this Image of Death, which hath us ſo many hours, every night, in its arms? And yet beſides this, eating and drinking, journeys and viſits, the buſineſſes and cares of this life, which challenge ſome of our thoughts, devour, no body knows how great, a portion of every day. To ſay nothing of thoſe hours, when we are fit for little or nothing; but are forced to find, as we ſignificantly ſpeak, ſome paſtime for the entertainment of our wearied minds.

O bleſſed Jeſus, how few are the minutes, that theſe ſouls, incloſed in fleſh, can ſpend in thy company? Into what a little room

are

are the thoughts of thee, and of thy unmeaſurable love, moſt wretchedly crowded? How ſoon are we weary, and how often are we forced away; when we have the greateſt mind to thy ſweet Society? O the cares that not only divert, but ſometimes oppreſs us! O the multitude of troubles which are wont to diſquiet us! the ſickneſſes and infirmities of our bodies, which indiſpoſe us! beſides the great weakneſs and feebleneſs of theſe ſpirits, which are not able long to bear thee company!

It is but a wiſh, I ſee, that I may always ſtay with thee. I feel my ſelf pulled away, and cannot keep my ſoul above, even when thou haſt lifted it up unto thee. And therefore I cannot but renew my deſires, that thou wouldeſt be pleaſed to haſten thy coming. That's the time I long to ſee, becauſe I would be ever with thee, and always behold thy face; and perpetually ſpeak of thee; and declare thy love without ceaſing, in the height of love and devotion to thee.

O what a change will that day make in me; when I ſhall be all Life, and ſee not ſo much as the image or ſhadow of death any more? When I ſhall neither ſlumber nor ſleep, much leſs be ſick, or grow old and

dye; but always wake, and enjoy a perfect health, a vigorous youth, and immortal life? O the bleſſedneſs of that change, when I ſhall be hungry no more; nor have my head diſturbed with the fumes and clouds of food! When all my journeys will be at an end; and I ſhall never loſe nor leave the company I love! When I ſhall neither be croſt by others, nor vext with the violence of my own paſſions! When I ſhall be no more perplext with cares, nor dampt with fears; but dwell ſecure, in aſſured joys, for evermore!

Joys in the perfection of a glorified body; and of an exalted, inlarged ſpirit! Joys to find my ſelf in the company of thy Saints; and welcomed into the noble ſociety of Angels! Joy at the ſight of my deareſt Friends; the greateſt joys in thy preſence, and in the light of thy countenance; from whom I hope for all this joy!

O come, moſt bleſſed Saviour, that we may all be nothing but joy, and love, and peace, without any end. Come, and bring us to our beloved Reſt; and where can our ſouls find any reſt, but in thy boſom? Come that we may reſt from our labours; and where can we lay down our ſelves in perfect repoſe, but only in thy love? O come, and

and fill our hearts therewith; that we may hunger and thirſt no more. Come, that we may perfectly know what the new Wine of thy Kingdom is. Come, that we may deſire to feed on nothing elſe; but the ſweeteſt comforts, of ſeeing thy bleſſed face ſmileing on us. And that we may have no other buſineſs, nothing elſe to do, but to enjoy thee in all that we ſee: not ſo much imployment beſides, as to ſpend any time (as now we are forced to do) in wiſhing to enjoy thee.

X.

And yet there is ſtill a greater reaſon remaining, why we ſhould love our Lords appearing; becauſe we ſhall be brought by that to the very top and higheſt pitch of bliſs: which is to SEE GOD (*Matth.* v. 8.) and to SEE HIM AS HE IS, 1 *John* iij. 2. Not as the old Prophets ſaw him in viſions and dreams; nor as others ſaw him, in the Angels of his preſence: But —— alas! who can tell what this ſight is? What tongue, unleſs touched, as the Apoſtles were, by the Holy-Ghoſt, can declare any thing of ſuch a bliſs? The

day of *Pentecoſt* muſt return again, if we expect to have any language to expreſs, or thoughts to conceive the meaning of theſe words. We muſt intreat ſome Angel to come, and tell us, if he can, what it is to *ſee God*. Or rather we muſt confeſs, that, if he ſhould, we cannot underſtand ſuch celeſtial language. It is above our reach; and we do but babble, we do not ſpeak, when we adventure to diſcourſe of it.

Nay, when we depart this world, and ſhall be admitted into the bleſſed company above, we may not be able to comprehend much of it; if the opinion of many of the Ancient Fathers be true, that the Saints ſhall not enjoy that which is properly meant by the *Viſion of God*, till after the great day of our Lord. And therefore it will be our beſt way now, to do as the Painter did; who being to make a picture of Love, drew nothing on his Table but a Veil; which covered no body knew what under the ſhadow of it. Not ſo much to ſhow, as ſome have poorly conceived, that Love is blind; as to declare that it is an ineffable thing, a myſterious paſſion, not to be deſcribed by humane art. Such, I am ſure, is this *Viſion* of

of God; and ſuch is the love that it will beget. It is a ſecret never to be known, but by the enjoyment of it: A myſterie reſerved in the holy Place, to be beheld only by entring into it.

We have all a natural deſire indeed, to pry into this, as well as all other ſecrets. A ſtrong appetite we find within us, to be admitted into an intimate acquaintance with thoſe things, which are cloſely lockt up from us. We cannot chuſe but long to go within the Veil; and would fain have the curtain drawn aſide, that the glorious face of the Divine Majeſty may appear. But after all our ſearch and buſie enquiry, we are able to ſay no more at preſent but this;

O happy Darkneſs! O bleſſed, O moſt glorious obſcurity! For I do not know what elſe to call thee: How joyful is it to think, that thou art more than we can ask or think? What a pleaſure is it to know, that thou ſurpaſſeſt all that can now be known? How comfortable is it to believe that thou art hid from our eyes; only becauſe we are not capable to behold thy brightneſs?

Thou ſhameſt indeed hereby our ſmall underſtanding; but publiſheſt thine own moſt excellent Greatneſs. We are laid very low, when we hear thee ſpeaking thus, at preſent; but it lifts us up and highly exalts us, in our future hopes. We have no means to comprehend this gracious promiſe; nor know we what to think, when we read theſe words, you ſhall SEE GOD. *We muſt confeſs our weakneſs, which is abſolutely puzzled, with ſo few and ſo plain words. If we have any thing to boaſt of, it is only this advantageous ignorance. All that we have to glory in is; that (ſuch our hopes) we know not what to conceive of this dark (ſo we muſt now ſpeak) this unſeen and hidden brightneſs.*

But this we know, becauſe thou, O God, haſt told us, that when this preſent darkneſs is done away, and we ſhall ſee thee as thou art, *WE SHALL BE LIKE THEE. O moſt deſireable ſight, which will ſo happily transform us! O much wiſht for day; which will ſet us in ſuch a light, as will make us all bright and ſhining too! Shining in the light of the wiſdom of God; in the light of his Purity; and of his Bliſs and Immortality. In*

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the light which makes the eyes of Angels ſhine ſo brightly; and which preſerves the youth of Saints. The light which no man can approach unto; till thou, O God, who art that Light, ſhalt finiſh our hope, and bring us to ſee thee face to face.

And may we not be confident of this alſo (though we know ſo little) that when thou, O bleſſed God, ſhalt cauſe thy Son to appear, and ſhalt ſhow thy ſelf unto us, the very firſt glimpſe of thy glory, at the greateſt diſtance from thee, will mightily attract our hearts unto thee? No arrow, ſure, flies more ſwiftly from the ſtrongeſt bow, no bullet can be ſent with greater violence from the bended force of ſteel, than our ſouls ſhall then move, or rather ſhoot themſelves towards thee; that they may know what it is to ſee thee, and that they may be like thee.

And till that joyful day ſhall come, ſhine thou, O bleſſed Light, perpetually in theſe eyes. Strike through all the clouds that incompaſs me round about; and by the bright hopes of thee, chaſe away all my gloomy thoughts, and put out the falſe luſtre of this deceitful world. Shed, O thou bleſſedlight, thy glorious beams into this heart; and kindle there ſuch holy flames as may conſume

conſume all ſinful deſires, and purifie my ſoul as thou art pure. Let me burn continually with an ardent love of thee; till thy bright day appear. Till not only theſe walls of fleſh be pulled down, which intercept thee from me: but my ſpirit fly up in a lightſome body, that I may ſee thee.

That I may ſee thee, by whoſe power the Heavens and the Earth were made; thee by whoſe Wiſdom all things are governed; thee by whoſe infinite kindneſs mankind was redeemed. What a joy will it be to me to ſee thee, who didſt conduct me in my way; direct me at every turn; ſupport me in every ſtep; aſſiſt me in all the various paſſages of my life; ſecure me from innumerable temptations, preſerve me from as many dangers; and at laſt brought eſt me ſafe to ſee thee, and rejoyce with thee for ever.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the mighty power and pleaſure of Love, when it is ſetled in the heart.

AND thus I am come to the end of this other part of my Diſcourſe: Wherein the reaſons of placing our beſt affections on the appearing of Chriſt have been ſo plainly deduced; that, as they cannot but be underſtood, ſo they cannot but move thoſe hearts, which do not quite turn away their minds from all conſideration of them. And that it ſhould be hard to do, one would think, if we have the leaſt acquaintance with the Chriſtian Religion. Which hereby moſt ſtrongly recommends it ſelf unto us, that it gives us ſuch great and glorious hopes; and entertains our tireſome Pilgrimage with ſuch delightful contemplations, of the joys and pleaſures we ſhall have in another

another world; especially when we come to rest with our Lord for ever.

No man that is in his wits, would be without the comfort of this expectation. It far exceeds all our present enjoyments: and is in it self so desireable, that we may truly say, Faith doth not beg to be admitted by us; but rather commands us to open our hearts and let it in; if we would have any constant pleasure, and setled peace and satisfaction there, which nothing but the Christian belief can establish in us. And this is the misery of all those who do not faithfully receive the Gospel; that as they shall miss of the greatest blessings hereafter, so they want the highest comfort in the world at present: Which is, to wait with assured hope for those good things, which our Lord will give us at his appearing. By the expectance of which, we are not only a little pleased while we imploy our minds in such meditations as these; but they put us into a state of pleasure and constant satisfaction, by drawing our hearts to Heaven, and placing us out of the power, though not out of the reach, of all worldly accidents.

For

For ſuch is the condition of man, as the Diſciples of *Plato*'s School have well expreſſed it, that there are two effuſions and ecſtaſies, as we may call them, of his ſoul; two ſorts of inebriation (as ſome of them love to ſpeak) whereby he is diſpoſſeſſed of himſelf. By the one (which is a Divine rapture) we are carried out and placed above our ſelves: by the other (which is the witchery of ſenſe) we are hurried away, and thruſt down into a condition below our ſelves. Their meaning is, that man being of a middle nature, between Angels and Beaſts; by his intellectual part partaking of the nature of thoſe heavenly beings, and by his ſenſitive of the nature of the brutes; he may ſo apply himſelf either to the one or to the other, that he come, in great meaſure, out of his middle condition, and go either upward to the former, or downward to the later.

And this ſtrange feat is wrought by nothing elſe, but by the power of Love; which evidently intrances our ſouls, and tranſports us out of our ſelves: either to the celeſtial natures if it be Divine, or to the brutiſh, if it be founded only in the fleſh. By exerciſing our minds in

in the actions of ſpiritual life, and placing our affections on things above, we may deliver and infranchiſe our ſelves from a ſervile baſe condition; and approach nearer to the degree of Angels than of ordinary men. As on the contrary, by applying our minds and hearts wholly to corporeal actions, and addreſſing all our ſervices to the things of this world, we may ſo inthrall our ſelves, and bring our ſouls into ſuch bondage; that we ſhall ſink down into a vile eſtate, and become more like beaſts than men.

O ſtrange power of Love! which makes ſuch transformations! turning men either into Angels or into the moſt foridid creatures. How careful ſhould we be to obſerve its motions? What diligence ſhould we uſe, to watch whither it goes; and to ſee that this mighty paſſion be directed to the moſt excellent good? And if we do but open our eyes to receive the light of the glorious Goſpel, and all the beauties that it preſents unto us, we cannot eaſily be deceived. There are a world of noble enjoyments to which our Saviour invites us; if we will vouchſafe to look upon them,

them, and not be ſo ſottiſh, as to faſten our eyes only on a few objects here before us. He hath opened to us the Kingdom of Heaven; and tells us he will ſhow us all the glory of his Fathers houſe; if we will but wait a while, till he be ready to come, and fetch us thither. Why ſhould we not believe him, and daily look up unto him; with hearts full of joy that we are beloved of the Lord of life, and have a good hope to live together with him? What a change would this work in us? And how happy ſhould we be, to think of the far more glorious change, which the ſight of him will make; when by ſeeing him, we ſhall become what he is?

O the joy that begins to ſpring up in my heart! O what raviſhing words are thoſe, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS? *How ſweetly they enter into mine ears? How deliciouſly they ſpread and diffuſe themſelves all over my mind; and ſtrongly penetrate to my very heart? I am changed already. I am not what I was; but quite another man: All*

light

light and joy, all ſpirit and life, while I think of theſe things. And can I ever ſo forget them, as to be allured and drawn away, from my ſelf and my Saviour, from my enjoyments and my hopes, by any earthly pleaſures?

What compariſon is there between thoſe two ſtates I now deſcribed, that I ſhould be in danger of ſuch temptations? Is there any need to ask, which is moſt to be choſen? To ſuffer my heart to be touched with ſuch a ſenſe of Divine pleaſures, as to be raviſht out of my ſelf, and become more than man; or to expoſe it ſo to the ſolicitations of ſenſible delights, as to be inticed by them another way out of my ſelf, and transformed into the nature of the beaſts that periſh?

We are all deſirous and forward enough to climb higher; and our ambition tempts us to mount to as noble a ſtation, as it is poſſible to reach: And therefore let us aſcend, O my ſoul, to the Lord Jeſus; let us lift up our thoughts ſtill towards the holy place where he reigns; and look for the time of his appearing, to make us reign with him for ever. This is the moſt pleaſant object we can behold; or rather is a collection of innumerable pleaſures, which

all

all here meet together: and therefore cannot but be of mighty power to raviſh our ſpirits, and ennoble our natures, by making them divine. Hither let us vigorously and cheerfully bend our thoughts; let our hearts ſend many and many a wiſh this way; and then it will be as impoſſible for any thing to hinder us from being made heavenly, as it is to keep the ſtone from its centre, or the tendereſt heart from becoming like to that which it dearly loves.

Here we ſee what God the Father Almighty will do for his Son Jeſus; and what our Lord Jeſus will do for us, who depend upon his Love. We behold our ſelves here ranked among the Heavenly hoſt; changed into ſpirits; made perfect in love; crowned with immortality; beautified with the light of Divine knowledge and with unſpotted purity of heart; brought into the preſence of our Lord, and unto the ſight of God. On which incomparable happineſs while we fix our eyes, it muſt needs ſnatch us quite from all other things; and make us live out of our ſelves. But it will be only to place us above our ſelves; and, by a moſt deſireable departure from what we are, to put us into ſo bleſſed a

condition, that we ſhall never wiſh to return to our ſelves any more.

And indeed the more or leſs our ſouls are drawn forth of themſelves either way, ſo much the harder or eaſier it is to go back into themſelves again. For if we be much raviſhed with theſe heavenly things, if we love the Appearing of Chriſt exceedingly, and attentively fix our minds in expectation of it; we ſhall have little mind to turn our hearts towards corporeal enjoyments, during the ſenſe and lively reliſh of thoſe Divine pleaſures, which have withdrawn us from them. And when the inclinations and neceſſities of our earthly Nature call us back again unto them, it will be with a remembrance of thoſe celeſtial joys ſtill remaining; which will preſerve our ſouls from immerſing themſelves in things below them. Juſt as when a mans heart is engaged in the ſtricteſt bonds of love, which have tied him faſt to a very agreeable perſon, whatſoever company he comes into, he will ſecretly ſteal out of it, to caſt a glance upon that beloved object: So will our mind be apt to look up towards Heaven (even when we are in the charming

ſociety

ſociety of that perſon) if the Lord and the glory of his appearing be our chiefeſt love and higheſt delight. As on the contrary, if we have but a ſlight touch and taſte of theſe heavenly truths, we ſhall be the eaſier diverted from them; and perſwaded to yield up our ſelves to ſeek our ſatisfaction in the cold enjoyment of theſe earthly delights.

And thus it is, in like manner, when men follow brutal pleaſures; the more ſtrongly they are raviſht with them and addict themſelves to them; the more they loſe the uſe of their reaſon and underſtanding, and the more uncapable they grow, being ſo attentive to theſe delights, to receive any guſt of nobler enjoyments. Whereas, if our taſte of theſe things be more ſuperficial, and we do not apply our minds with all their force unto them, nor dwell upon them; we ſhall be the eaſier called off from them, and ſtand in need of fewer importunities to quit their company, for better entertainments.

Which demonſtrates how neceſſary it is, that we ſhould indeavour to be well acquainted with the coming of our Lord; to believe it with an unſhaken faith; to

perſwade our ſelves of it, as if we ſaw it; to ſet our hearts upon it, and place our comforts in it; that ſo it may have the greater authority over us, and command us irreſiſtibly from all things beneath us, and force us to give our ſelves intirely to our Lord Jeſus.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the means whereby this Love may be ſetled in our hearts; and the Benefit thereof.

AND for the better effecting this which ſo nearly concerns us, we ought, as to think frequently and ſeriouſly of it ſo, to uſe all the means that are in our power, to repreſent our bleſſed Lord and his glorious Appearing, in the moſt lively manner unto our hearts. Among which, I believe, you will find none more effectual, than to frequent his ſociety, in the Communion of his Body and of his Blood. Where we not only meet with a fair occaſion, both to imprint upon our hearts a ſenſe of his love, and to expreſs all the love we have to him: but have a moſt powerful inſtrument alſo put into our hands, to enkindle and ſtir up the moſt hearty, vehe-

ment and burning Affection towards him.

For there he is ſet before our eyes in ſuch a poſture of love, as cannot but wound any heart, that hath the grace to conſider what it ſees. There we behold him hanging for our ſake upon a Croſs; from whence his mighty love ſhoots the moſt piercing darts into our breaſts. We ſee him there in ſuch flames as offered him up intirely to do the will of God; and, if we come near them, will touch us ſo ſenſibly, that we ſhall be diſpoſed to make our ſelves alſo a devout oblation to him. His Body broken, his Blood ſhed, his very Life ſacrificed for our ſafety, are there ſo evidently and diſtinctly ſet before our eyes; that as it will be hard for us not to be tenderly affected with his aſtoniſhing love to us, ſo we are hereby aſſured of his continued kindneſs, till he bring us to eternal life.

We do not indeed behold him there as ſitting on the throne of his glory; nor as appearing again the ſecond time to give us ſalvation: But yet it plainly ſhows us what he underwent, to purchaſe for us as well as for himſelf that glory wherein he is; and bids us reſt ſatisfied

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he will do more for us, even all that he hath promiſed: of which, by theſe tokens and pledges of his love, which he hath left behind him when he departed this world, he doth moſt affectionately aſſure us. And by partaking of them, we become alſo one body with him; and have communion with him in his death and paſſion, and all the benefits he hath thereby obtained for his Church. Among which this is the laſt and the greateſt, that we ſhall be with him where he is, and ſee the glory which the Father hath given him. We ought not to doubt of it, being thus incorporate with him, and ſo united to him; that in him we already live, and reign, and are glorious: and can no more fail of appearing at laſt with him in his glory, than the Members can fail to be advanced, when the Head, to which they are firmly and inſeparably joyned, is highly honoured and dignified.

As a loving Wife therefore, married to an Husband moſt completely qualified, but gone into a remote country, cannot but fix her thoughts very much upon his coming, and often wiſh for the happy day which will bring them nearer, and

make them meet and live together; and, in the mean time, if ſhe have his picture exactly taken, cannot refrain from looking often on it, and pleaſing her eyes and her mind with the very ſhadow of that dear Perſon; or if ſhe have any token of his love left or ſent her, whereby to remember him, is ever and anon taking it into her hands, and imprinting her kiſſes on it: ſo it becomes all thoſe to do, who pretend any love to our Lord Jeſus; who hath endeared himſelf to us by ſuch incomparable loving kindneſs, and merited ſo highly of us, that it would be exceeding ſtrange if we ſhould be either inſenſible of his favours, or let them ſlip out of our minds, when (among the reſt of the expreſſions of his wonderful love) he hath taken great care to preſerve the remembrance of them there.

Our gracious Lord, the Bridegroom of our ſouls, is gone a long journey, even as far as Heaven. He hath eſpouſed us to himſelf, it is true, in great love, moſt aſſured love; but hath left us, for a time, here in this world, and removed himſelf ſo far from us, that, though there be nothing ſo deſireable as his company,

to

to thoſe who are acquainted with him and have any affection for him, yet they find the diſtance is ſo exceeding great between them, that they cannot attain their much wiſht for enjoyment of him. And therefore every good ſoul ſhould look towards him and, ſighing within it ſelf, ſhould often ſay, *When will he come, when will he come! and let me have the long deſired ſight of him? When will he come, and finiſh what he hath ſo graciouſly begun? O that he would come, and take me to him! O that he would come, and ſatisfie this ſoul; which is ready to diſſolve, and ſweetly melt into that bliſsful union with him!* And till he pleaſe to grant this deſire, we ſhould often faſten our expecting eyes on the Picture he hath left us of himſelf; drawn, as I may ſay, by his own hand: which tells us he will certainly come, and requires us to reſt aſſured he will be as good as his word, and give us immortal life in the glory where he is. We ſhould frequent, I mean, the holy Sacrament of his body and blood; we ſhould love there to communicate with him and knit our ſelves to him; it ſhould be our greateſt pleaſure to ſolace our ſelves in that repreſentation of him, till he comes. We

ſhould

ſhould affectionately receive into our hands thoſe tokens and pledges of his love, which he continually ſends us by his Miniſters; we ſhould take them into our mouths, yea let them into our hearts; and, embracing him in thoſe ſigns and ſeals of his grace towards us, ſhould rejoyce in his love; till he himſelf appear, and lay our ſouls to reſt in his boſom for ever.

If there were no other benefit we ſhould receive by this means, than that thereby our love will be mightily excited towards him, who hath loved us ſo dearly, it were ſufficient to commend this duty to us. But we ſhall alſo grow thereby more confident of his appearing again to perfect his love towards us; and in the mean time be ſtill receiving freſh tokens of the affection he now hath for us. For as the thoughts of his love hath the greateſt power over our hearts: ſo we need not fear to ſay, that the love he ſees in us, is of ſuch force and efficacy with him; that it ſtrongly moves his tender compaſſions towards us. *If any man love me* (ſaith he himſelf xiv. *Joh.* 21, 23.) *he ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf*

ſelf to him. O, what a word is this, *I will love him?* How it pierces into the heart! How it ſtirs, and works; how it revives and refreſhes there! Can there be any thing greater than this, to be beloved of the Lord of Heaven, the Prince of Life, the King of Glory? What will not he do for thoſe whom he loves, when we ſee he did not ſtick to dye for them, even before they loved him?

You know that when *Lazarus* was ſick (as I think I have ſomewhere obſerved in another Treatiſe) his Siſters ſent this news to our Saviour, ſaying; *Lord, behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick*, xi. Joh. 3. This was a very ſhort Letter: And their grief perhaps would not permit them to write a longer. But they did not fare the worſe, becauſe they were not more ceremonious in their addreſſes: this alone did the buſineſs. O how great a power was there in theſe few words? They ſay no more to move him, but only this, *Lord, thou loveſt him*; and what doth not our Saviour do, to ſhow they were not miſtaken? Up he riſes; away he goes to the place of his abode; there needed no more prayers to bring him thither. And though there were many dangers in the way,

way, as the ſtory relates; though to go thither, his Diſciples thought was to caſt himſelf into a ſhowr of ſtones (v. 8.) though the Jews, he knew very well, ſought to take him and kill him (x.39.) yet love being as ſtrong as death, carried him through all impediments: He could not chuſe but go, when he heard this charming word, he *whom thou loveſt* is ſick.

By which we may learn that to obtain the favour and grace, the help and aſſiſtance, the comfort and the preſence of our bleſſed Saviour, we need no long Petitions, no great addreſs of words, no courtſhip, nor ſtudied complements. Let us be able only to tell him, that he loves us; and it is enough. If we can but win his good affection, we need no more. We may then remember to him his own dear love, more than ours. We may tell him, how much good he hath done us, and that is argument ſufficient to move him to do more.

We may relate his graciouſneſs and ſweet diſpoſition; when we can perceive in our own hearts, but diſguſts at our ſelves. We may ſay, O my Lord, I have ſeen by many arguments the wonderful great

great good will thou beareſt to me. For thou haſt inſtructed my ignorance, pitied my weakneſſes, cured many of my diſeaſes, delivered me from the power of temptations; I cannot tell what thou haſt done for me, O moſt merciful Saviour, who art ſtill going on, by innumerable ways, to teſtifie thou loveſt me. And this humble devout acknowledgement, will certainly invite a further effuſion of his favours. For it is a pleaſure to him to do benefits; eſpecially to thoſe he loves. He rejoyces over them to do them good. He loves to accompliſh his own good purpoſes, and delights, as much as they can deſire, to perfect what he hath happily begun in them. And therefore we may intreat him to give himſelf that pleaſure; not to loſe any of that joy, which will ſo much pleaſe and rejoyce us alſo; and make us his debtors, his admirers, his adorers, and lovers to all eternity.

We may deſire him, even that it would pleaſe him to come again, according to his promiſe; becauſe he loves us, and becauſe he loves to finiſh his works of love: and we may be confident he will, and bring his rewards with him. Though he ſtay,

ſtay, we think, a great while (for certain reaſons which he beſt knows) before he come; as he ſtayed two days after he heard of *Lazarus* his ſickneſs, (notwithſtanding the love he had for him, and his intentions to reſcue him from death:) yet we ought not to be diſcouraged, if we be ſure he loves us; but believe that he will appear at laſt, and that he will raiſe us up, though we lye dead in our graves, and have lain ſo perhaps many years, and that he will bid us come forth, and go along with him, whither his endleſs love will lead us.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

A continuation of the former Argument, concerning the mighty power of the Divine Love; and the Benefit we have by loving our Lords Appearing.

HAve we not great reaſon then to love him, and to love his appearing: ſince that will be the beſt argument of his love to us; and his love, you ſee, will prove ſuch an aſſurance of all his bleſſings? What will move us, if this cannot do it? Need there any thing more be ſaid, to draw our affections towards him? If there do, then let me aſſure you that love will even transform us into him.

There is nothing more diſcernible in this paſſion, than that it aſſimilates us unto the Thing or Perſon which we love.

Which

Which ſhould teach us indeed to have a great care what and whom we love; but ſhould excite us to love him, our Deareſt Lord, without any meaſure: Becauſe nothing is ſo deſireable as to be like to him; and nothing can prepare us ſo ſurely for his glorious appearing. *In that which every man loves, in that he lives,* ſaith St. *Auſtin* upon thoſe words of the great Apoſtle St. *Paul* [*not I live, but Chriſt liveth in me.*] So great, ſo mighty a thing is true love; that it carries the heart from the place where it is, and tranſlates it thither where it loves. If thou loveſt thy ſelf merely, then thou liveſt altogether in thy ſelf: But if thy heart be ſet on any other perſon or thing, then thou liveſt in that which hath ingaged thy affection: And if it be Jeſus whom thou loveſt in ſincerity, it is certain that in him alſo thou liveſt.

Of ſo great importance it is, that we love aright: For he that loves ill, lives ill; and he that loves well, cannot but live well too. But there is no danger at all in loving our Lord and his appearing: and therefore we need not ſtand to ask our ſelves whether we ſhould love him

him or no; or how much we ſhall love him; or with what paſſion and concernment we ſhould ſet our hearts upon his coming again, to take us into his glory. There is nothing to hinder us, from loving here as much as ever we are able; no fear our affections ſhould be too far ingaged, as they may be in other caſes; all that caution is uſeleſs here, which, when we are in purſuit of leſſer injoyments, is but neceſſary, to put a check upon our hearts, and cool a little our love towards them. The more we love him, the more we ſhall be like him; the more we love him, the more we ſhall live in him. This love makes us divine and heavenly; it purifies us, and makes us fit to live with him.

I muſt add alſo that, according to this rule, by *loving his appearing*, we ſhall be formed to ſome likeneſs of it; as much as we are capable here to be wrought and faſhioned to an imitation of a thing ſo bright and full of glory. It will raiſe our minds that is, to a noble pitch; and highly improve our degenerate nature. It will invite him to manifeſt himſelf to us, and graciouſly to ſhine upon us. It will poſſeſs us with a lively ſenſe of him, and of the glory wherein he lives. The

light of his countenance will be lifted up on our ſouls; and he will fill us with a ſtronger ſenſe of life and immortality. It will chaſe away the baſe fear of death; and kill all vitious affections in us. We ſhall be purified, and refined from all our droſs, by theſe holy fires. There is no ſin will be able to live in the ſame place with this heavenly love; but will continually languiſh and decay, as this increaſes and grows ſtronger in our ſouls. Our ſpirits thereby will become more cheerful, light and aerial. They will aſcend more eaſily towards thoſe celeſtial places; and be leſs inclined, though they feel its attractions, toward this lower world. O what a Coronet of Glory, will this love place before-hand on our head! It is it ſelf a royal ornament, and a diadem of glory. It's a participation of a Divine Nature, an entrance upon the life of God, an Heaven upon earth, a pleaſure whereby we anticipate the joys of the other world: for if all love have a ſweetneſs in it, this Divine love ſure cannot but entertain us with a tranſcendent ſatisfaction.

By this we have our converſation in Heaven; and it is there only to be *ever with the Lord* (as much as our condition here

here will give us leave) for nothing but love will make him familiar to our thoughts, and preſent him frequently to the eye of our minds. Yea, this is the beſt glaſs we have, while we are here below, wherein to *ſee God.* If there be any way to know the meaning of thoſe words, we muſt learn it of this Teacher; which alone can diſcover to us ſo great a myſterie. Nothing elſe can lead us into that ſecrecy, and reveal to us what lies hid in that retirement, *the Viſion of God.* Never hope for any key to open a door into the Holy of Holies; unleſs it be this of heavenly love. If it be poſſible to peep a little behind the veil; it is love only that enjoys ſo ſingular a priviledge. For God, you ſee, is love: and the Apoſtle tells us, that when Faith and Hope ſhall be done away, it is charity alone that ſtill remains; as a thing of longer duration than this world, and whoſe proper place is Heaven. This is one of the Cherubims of Glory, that inhabits the moſt holy place, and attends upon the Majeſty on high. This is of an Angelical Nature, and is always there where God is. It waits upon him; it miniſters to him; it knows his mind; it is privy

to his thoughts and deſigns; and makes us underſtand more of him, than all the wit in the world can do beſide.

There is nothing can lend wings to the ſoul, but only love: which raiſes us above this world, and ſets us in the preſence of him that made it. And what a ſight doth it give us there, of his boundleſs, bottomleſs Goodneſs? If it can ſhow us nothing elſe, it will not fail to let us ſee how gracious, how wonderfully gracious the Lord is. With what kindneſs doth love behold almighty Providence, ſpreading it ſelf in tender mercy over all its works? It is this alone can make us feel how inclinable the Divine Nature is, to pour out its Benefits. Nothing but love can make us know what an everlaſting ſpring it is of grace and bounty; and with what unwearied kindneſs it delights to communicate its bleſſings to us. And what is there that we would ſee, which is comparable to this? What can we deſire to ſee, but more of this; even when we are made perfect in love? And what thanks do we owe to God that we ſee ſo much? It ought to ſtir up all that is within us, to bleſs his holy name. We ought to ſay; *every day*

day will I bleſs thee, and praiſe thy name for ever and ever.

But for this alſo we muſt be beholden to love. For it is that which indites all our Hymns, and meditates the Divine Praiſes. It puts the ſongs of joy into our mouth; and fills our hearts with thankſgiving. Our tongues are tyed without this; or we do but babble, not ſpeak, our Saviours praiſes.

It is love that burſts out into ſuch effuſions as theſe;

O praiſe the Lord of love, who humbled himſelf do dwell among us. Praiſe him in the beauties of his holineſs; praiſe him in his ſuper-excellent wiſdom. Let all his works praiſe him; who came to us with his hands full of Miracles, and every miracle full of mercy. O praiſe him in his almighty and moſt merciful kindneſs; which made the lame to leap like a Kid, and the tongue of the dumb to ſing for joy: which opened the eyes of the blind to ſee his wonders; and the ears of the deaf to hear the wiſdom whereby he ſpake: which reſtored the ſick to health, and the dead to life: which publiſhed the Goſpel to the poor, and inſtruct-

ed the ignorant in the myſteries of the Kingdom of God.

O praiſe him, before whom the Devils fled, and confeſſed him to be the Lord. Praiſe him in his incomparable love; which thought it not enough to do all this, but alſo gave himſelf to dye for us. Let all Nations praiſe him, who are the purchaſe of his blood. Let them mark every ſtep of his dying love; from the time he was betrayed and ſold like a ſlave, till he finiſhed his ſufferings on the Croſs. O the greatneſs of that love, which endured ſuch ſcorn, ſuch reproach, ſuch a bitter agony and ſhameful death, even for all thoſe who have little ſenſe of this wondrous love!

But let no Chriſtian ſoul be inſenſible, how the hands which wrought ſo many Miracles, and the feet which travelled up and down to do men good, were cruelly nailed by them to an ignominious Gibbet. Let them remember how his head was crowned with thorns, and his body cloathed in a fools coat. How they ſpit in his face, blinded his eyes, and then rudely buffeted him to make them ſport. O what love was that, which made him ſubmit to be mocked and reviled, to be accounted worſe than a ſeditious murderer, and numbred among the

greateſt

greateſt tranſgreſſors! And above all, let it never be forgotten how he ſweat in our ſervice, as it had been drops of blood; and at laſt bled to death, after three hours ſhame and anguiſh on the Croſs.

Praiſed be that incomparable Charity. Praiſed be his inimitable meekneſs and humilitie. Let all the world extol and praiſe his Lamb-like patience and innocence. Let them celebrate his admirable kindneſs in forgiving ſuch implacable enemies; and his intire confidence and faith in God, whereby he offered up himſelf to him, and obtained an eternal redemption for us. O the wonderful vertue of that ſacrifice, which hath taken away the ſins of the world! Praiſed be the tender mercies of our God, which have forgiven us ſo many treſpaſſes. Praiſed be his mercies, which have not only forgiven us; but reſtored us to life and glory again, by the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead.

Let us rejoyce and be glad in that great ſalvation. Let us bleſs the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by that reſurrection of his from the dead. Let us lift up our heads and look to Heaven our ancient

Country, for there he is exalted: And let us thank our God, who hath ſet him at his own right hand, and made him moſt glorious for ever.

See how all the Angels welcomed him thither; and falling at his feet, moſt humbly worſhipped his Majeſty. See how they all now wait upon him, and conſtantly attend his pleaſure. And let us worſhip him too, with the devouteſt and moſt lowly reverence. Let us praiſe him in his Sanctuary: where he appears before God for us; from whence he ſends down the gracious influences of his ſpirit on us; and commands his Angels to miniſter unto us. Let us praiſe him, the glorious King of Angels and men. Who hath conquered death; and triumphed over all the powers of darkneſs; and opening the Kingdom of Heaven to all the faithful, hath promiſed that they ſhall reign in glory together with him.

Let all the Angelical Miniſters praiſe him. Let the Apoſtles, Prophets and Martyrs praiſe him. Let all thoſe who are departed in the true faith and fear of him, praiſe him. And let all the living, who partake of the daily fruit of his bounteous love, continually praiſe him. Let them praiſe the name of the Lord: for his name alone

alone is excellent, his glory is above the Earth and Heaven.

Let them praise him in the greatness of his Power, in the Wisdom of his Counsels, in the carefulness of his Providence, in the riches, the exceeding riches of his Grace, in the stedfastness of his word, and the faithfulness of all his promises. And let them all joyn together and beseech him to come again; that he may both accomplish our hopes, and perfect his own praises.

O let him come that we may give him better praises, in one body for ever.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

More expreſſions of this devout affection, towards our Lords Appearing; and the way whereby we may excite them.

THis is ſome of the language of Love; which wiſhes every knee would bow to Jeſus, and every tongue confeſs that he is the Lord; to the glory of God the Father, who hath thus highly exalted him. For its deſires are unlimited; and its kindneſs, like the fountain of it, is inexhauſtible and infinite. It is the brighteſt image of Jeſus. There is nothing repreſents him ſo lively to the world. He now appears moſt in thoſe who love moſt; and who long and wait with pure and ardent deſires to ſee him come in all his glory. For they will *keep his commandment without ſpot, unrebukeable, until his appearing: which in*

in his times he will ſhew, who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee; to whom be honour and power everlaſting. Amen.

Why then, O my ſoul, do we not let this bleſſed gueſt be lodged in our heart? Or why do we not entertain it ſo that it may ſtay with us; and we may feel it ſtirring there in reſtleſs motions towards Jeſus? What is the cauſe that we who are made to love, ſhould not let our love turn divine; and addreſs it moſt devoutly to him, who beſt deſerves the Love of all the world? Or what may it be, that keeps us from running with the whole current of our affections, towards that heavenly Lover; who ſues ſo earneſtly to us for our hearty love? Hath he not loved us enough to make us love him? Was he a cold and indifferent Lover, that could not touch the heart with a ſenſe of his kindneſs? Was he perfectly frozen and careleſs in our concerns, when the urgent wants of our ſouls, called for his kind and compaſſionate relief? Or did he pre-

pretend a great deal of kindneſs, and made long proteſtations of his love; but did juſt nothing to merit our affection?

There need no anſwer to ſuch queſtions; which ſerve only to reproach and confound our inſenſibleneſs and negligence; who have nothing to ſay, why we do not love him. For ſo apparent is his love, ſo confeſſedly great, ſo coſtly and expenſive, ſo tender and obliging; that as it had no example, nor can be ever exactly imitated; ſo it muſt needs attract all thoſe and fill them with the greateſt love, who do not turn away their eyes, and their ears, and their hearts from this Lord of love.

Let us but liſten a while to him, and we ſhall hear him ſay; was there any love like unto my love? What is it that you would have had me done for you, more than I have done (without your deſire) to win your love? Hath any man greater love than this, that he lay down his life for his Friends?. But what were you, for whom I died? Herein God commended his love towards you, in that while you were yet ſinners, I dyed for you. And what was the purchaſe I made by that price, which I laid down for you? Who is it that hath the keys of Hell and death? To whom is all

power

power given in Heaven and in Earth? Can any but I forgive your ſins; and open to you the Kingdom of Heaven; and reſtore you to the joys of Paradiſe; nay, make you eat of the tree of life in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God?

Where do you read of any King, who, at his Coronation, gave ſuch royal gifts to men? From whom do you expect the Crown of righteouſneſs, and an eternal inheritance; of which I gave the earneſt ſo long ago? Can you think of any thing comparable to the glory of my appearing? Or is there any doubt whether I will come or no; or whether you ſhall appear with me in that celeſtial glory? What would you have me do to ſatisfie and aſſure you, more than I have already done; by my Word, and by my Blood, and by my Angels, and by my Holy Spirit; which I have ſent down from Heaven to bear witneſs to me, and to tell you that I will certainly come again, and give you the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world? Believe it, I will as ſurely come again, as I died; and roſe from the dead; and viſibly aſcended into Heaven; and according to my promiſe poured out the Holy-Ghoſt upon my Apoſtles, and inſpired them to proclaim this

this in all tongues and languages; that I ſtill live; and that, becauſe I live, you ſhall live alſo.

And is it poſſible for us to think we hear him ſpeaking to us in this manner (as he doth in his bleſſed Goſpel) and not be provoked to ſummon all the powers of our ſoul, to offer up themſelves in devout and hearty love to him? What hath the deareſt friend, whom we love with ſo much paſſion; nay, even our tendereſt Parents done for us, in compariſon with this love? Or what can the favour of all the Princes on earth (ſhould they unite all their powers to love and honour us) beſtow and heap upon us, worthy to be named together with this miraculous love? It ought to call us from all vain delights. Our minds ſhould continually ſtudy to comprehend the breadth and length, the depth and height: and to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge. Our wills ought to be more paſſionately bent towards him; and grow every day ſtronger in his love. Our memories ſhould be a moſt faithful Treaſury of the manifold tokens of his Love. Our tongues and our hearts ſhould never ceaſe to meditate and ſing the praiſes of his wondrous love. For

For if we could ſpeak to him (as we may conceive him ſpeaking to us) and ask him what he did before the world; he would tell us that, *He loved.* If we could ask him what moved his Almighty Wiſdom to make the world; he would tell you that *he loved.* If we could further ask what he hath done ever ſince; he would ſtill ſay, *he loved.* And what brought him down from Heaven (if we could ask again) to be partaker of our miſeries; he would tell you again that *he loved.* And could we ask again why he would humble himſelf ſo low as to take the form a ſervant, and dye a baſe, ſervile and ignominious death, the death of the Croſs, he would again tell you, that *he loved.* And if you could ſtill go on to ask what moved him to ſend the Holy Ghoſt and give ſuch gifts to men; you would ſtill receive the ſame anſwer, becauſe *he loved.* And could you beſeech him not to be angry and you would inquire again, what he hath been doing ſince thoſe days, and what he now does; he would give you no new anſwer, but that *he loves.* And if you ſhould pray him once more to tell you *what he loves*; he would let you know, it is nothing but *love, abundance of love.* This

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This is the thing he would win by his love. This is all that he asks and desires at our hands; though he hath obliged us so much. For this he solicites and beseeches; having set his heart upon it, as the fruit of his incomparable love. He intreats for this, as if it were for his life, that we would be at last so sensible of all his kindness, as to let him have our unfeigned love. For he being Love himself, loves nothing else but sincere and hearty love.

O blessed Jesus, should all our hearts then say, *how much doth thy love differ from ours! Love brought thee down from Heaven to us; but how few of us (and how slowly) doth it carry up thither unto thee? Love made thee dye the most shameful death; but it doth not make us live the most glorious life. It made thee endure the sorest pains; but, alas! it doth not make mankind take the pleasure of following thy steps to the greatest happiness. It made thee think perpetually on such poor wretches as we are; but how seldom are our minds fixed, or how small is the number whom love inclines to think, upon so glorious a person as thy self?* It

It perſwaded thee to come to us, when there was nothing to call thee but only our great miſeries; but it doth not bring us all to thee, when we are moved by the merits, and the pretious promiſes of ſo great a love. Thy Preaching was Love, thy Miracles were love, thy whole Life was love, thy Death was the moſt ſingular love, thy laſt breath, in a manner, was love, one of thy laſt words was love, even to the bittereſt enemies, thy Sacraments are love, the Holy-Ghoſt the Comforter is love, thy Embaſſadors were love, thou art, we ſee All love; and yet, dull and ſtupid blocks that we are, we are nothing leſs than this Divine love.

O ſweet Saviour, what wilt thou do with ſuch vile, ſuch wretched hearts, as theſe of ours? Canſt thou endure ſo much as to look upon ſuch ſouls, as are ſo frozen before thy fires? Canſt thou ſhed one beam more upon ſuch icy hearts, that are ſo inſenſible of all thy flames? Is it poſſible that thou ſhouldeſt be ſo patient, as to bear with the prayers of thoſe, whoſe breaſts are ſo full of love, ſo propenſe to this affection, ſo free to pour it out to every thing; and yet allow ſo few or no drops of it unto thee, who deſerveſt all the love we have?

O Dearest Lord, if there be any room still left in thy heart for such as we are, be pleased once more to cast thine eyes upon us most miserable sinners. If thou canst lend thine ears to the requests of such foolish, such obstinate hearts, as have been so senslessly deaf to all thy gracious intreaties; hear the sighs and the groans of all those penitent souls who cry unto thee and say, Lord Jesus look upon us. Spare us, Good Lord, if it be but one dram of thy pity and tenderest compassion. O spare us but the least touch more from thine all-powerful hand; if thou art not weary of striking such rocky hearts, as now petition thee for thy love. O mollifie them, most gracious Lord, mollifie them, we beseech thee, with thy Dear love towards us. Now that they are a little tender and yielding to thee, melt and dissolve them into the like love towards thee. Enter into all our hearts; O that thou wouldst enter, and fill them with thy love. Overcome them with this powerful engine, thy mighty, thy wonderful Love.

Thy love, I say, thy most stupendious love; for no word pleases me so much as love. Give me leave therefore to repeat it over again, and to pray thee by thy love,

by

by thy dear and tender love, that thou wilt not paſs by this heart of mine (among all the reſt) which now at laſt would fain be repleniſhed with thy love. I lye here in the humbleſt devotion proſtrate at thy feet, and, gaſping there before thee, my ſoul pants and ſays; O Love, inſpire me: O Love, breath thy ſoul and life into me. As thou haſt overcome, ſo poſſeſs this heart intirely, and vouchſafe to dwell in me.

And do thou, my incomprehenſibly loving Saviour, make me ever thus to ſigh and groan, out of the very center of mine heart, after thee. Make me always to be ſaying thus to thee; O my life, my joy, my hope, my all, do not deſpiſe this languiſhing ſoul, which intreats thee to dwell in it, by thy ſurpaſſing love. Draw me after thee, and touch me ſo, that I may look upon nothing ſo much as thy love. Turn my heart about; and bend it wholly to thy love. Make me to ſpeak of nothing, with ſuch delight, as of thy love: to breath nothing, to ſtudy nothing, to deſire, to do nothing, but only love.

Let no day, at leaſt, paſs without ſome ſerious meditations of thy love. Let no Sun ſhine, but what ſhows me thee and thy love, ſhining brighter by far upon me.

Let no night close mine eyes, but do thou shut up a sense of thy self and thy love in my breast. Let no friend come to visit me, but give him thy love to bring along with him; and let him present thy self unto me. Let the sight of him, enkindle thy love in me. Let the embraces of him, knit me in faster affection to thee. Let the remembrance of him and his kindness, recall to mind thy infinitely greater love to me. Let every motion of my heart towards him, rest at last in the love of thee: who art the hope and the satisfaction both of him and me.

Still may I therefore think of thee more frequently. Still may I desire thee more passionately. Still may I obey the more universally. May the following acts of love and vertue, still out-strip the former: and one conquest of my self, make way for a nobler. May thine Almighty love still grow and prevail; till there be no affection that dare appear, no passion that dare presume to show its head, against the soveraign power of thy love in mine heart.

And now, O my Lord, I know not how to leave thee, untill I hear thee say, Thou lovest me. Prostrate still will I here lye

at

at thy feet, for I cannot have the heart to riſe up again; unleſs thou wilt ſpeak that kind, that gracious word, and tell me, that thou doſt not ceaſe to love me. Nay, I dye unleſs thou loveſt me. I ſhall make my grave here in this very place; and expire with theſe words in my mouth; LORD WHETHER I LIVE OR DYE IT MATTERS NOT; LET ME BUT KNOW THAT THOU LOVEST ME.

And may I be ſo bold as to conclude thou haſt ſome love to me, becauſe I feel my heart beat thus paſſionately towards thee, and my ſoul thirſts and cryes thus after thee? Will it not be too great a preſumption to think thou haſt not forſaken me, becauſe I cannot forſake my requeſt; but above all things long and labour to be beloved of thee? Is this love thou haſt wrought in my heart to thee, an incouragement to hope thou loveſt me? Truly then, my Lord, I am well ſatisfied. Then I know thou beareſt a favour to me. For my ſoul follows hard after thee; it cleaves unto thee; it loves thy memory; and delights it ſelf in thy Commandments.

It ſayes continually, nothing but more of thy love; nothing, but abundance of thy love. I open my heart unto thy exuberant love. I expoſe my ſelf to the power of thy tranſcendent love. I chuſe and deſire the pleaſures of thy love; above all the delights, wherewith the world can entertain me. Above the admired heaps of wealth, and the dazling heights of honour. Above the loudeſt praiſes of fame, and the bewitching applauſe of numerous ſpectators. Above the charms of beauty, and the more inticing delights of curious knowledge. Nay, above the ſolid joyes of health, and the moſt neceſſary refreſhments of nature. Above all, that even thine own bounty can give, to thoſe that love thee.

O let me but love thee; make me but always thus to love thee; always deſpiſe all other delights, compared with thoſe of loving thee; do but fill my heart with that love and with thoſe delights: and I am perfectly ſatisfied. I am at reſt now I have given my ſelf to thee intirely. And if I had a thouſand hearts, they ſhould be devoted to thy ſervice, with the moſt affectionate love to thee.

But

But yet, alas! when I think of thy wondrous love, I am apt to conclude again that I did amiſs to ſay, I was ſatisfied. All this, upon better thoughts, ſeems a great deal too little; and I am as ſhort, me thinks, of thy love, as if I loved thee not at all. For what have I given thee, when I have paid thee all my acknowledgements? What have I beſtowed on thee, when I have given thee my ſelf, and abſolutely offered all my affections to thee? What is my heart, what are a thouſand ſuch hearts as this worth; that I ſhould think ſuch a preſent will be of any eſteem with thee? If all my life were nothing elſe, but the moſt affectionate, the moſt cheerful obedience to thee; what requital ſhould I have made thee for all thy love to me?

Alas! I have ſo little ability to do any thing worthy of thee; that I have not the skill how to ſpeak, as becomes me, of my duty to thee. What do I talk of acknowledgements to thee? That's as if I could number or value thy favours. And it is a worſe abſurdity to ſpeak of giving thee my affections (as if I were not a debtor to thee) and of beſtowing my heart on thee; For that's as if I had any thing

I received not from thee. But it is worſt of all (I am aſhamed of it) to mention a requital of thy favours; for that's as if they were ſo ſmall or ſo few, as to admit of any return like a recompenſe unto thee.

No, No, I am nothing at all. I have nothing, I can do juſt nothing, but what is thine more than mine; if it be worth any thing. I here moſt ſolemnly proteſt that I think my ſelf indebted to thee, for all I have. I my ſelf am thine; my love is thine; my prayers and deſires are thine; my praiſes and thanksgivings are thine; ſo is my Faith and my Hope, my comforts and my joyes, they are all thine. I cannot ſo much as confeſs my debts and obligations; but it is from thee. I cannot be ſenſible of my faults; but I contract a new debt to thee. That I can ſo much as ſee and ſay, I am nothing, I owe it unto thee.

What ſhall I do therefore? How ſhall I expreſs my ſelf to thee? Or in what manner ſhall I approach thee? All that I can think of is only this; ſtill to caſt down my ſelf in the humbleſt devotion before thee, and all thawed and diſſolved with thy love to pour out my heart unto thee, ſaying;

saying; LORD, WORK THINE OWN GOOD PLEASURE IN ME. *Make me what thou thy self best likest and lovest. And when thou hast loved and obliged me as much as thou pleasest here; compleat thine own benefits and crown them with as great a glory, as thine own great love can bestow hereafter.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

The Concluſion.

AND here I think it is beſt to put a period to this diſcourſe; which is already come to a competent length. For where can I leave you better than in the arms of our Lord; intirely reſolved into his will, and wiſhing to be united to him, and made one ſpirit with him, as much as he pleaſes? And yet how hard is it to ceaſe to deſire that happineſs, in its utmoſt perfection? How can we chuſe but ask him leave, at leaſt to repete that wiſh over again? The very thoughts of it make the raviſhed ſoul, thruſt it ſelf with the more ardent affection into the boſom of his love. They ſtir it up to ply him with new petitions, that he will draw it more ſtrongly after him, and knit it more cloſely to him; that he will inſpire it

it with more of his love, and, by perfecting his likeneſs in it, inſeparably unite it to himſelf.

O bleſſed Jeſus, ſurely thou wilt appear: I believe in due time thou wilt appear. I am fully perſwaded thou wilt not fail to make good thy word; of coming to fetch us to thy ſelf, and making us exceedingly more happy than now, in our moſt inlarged thoughts, we can conceive. I ſee, me thinks, the ſky cleave, and the day break, and the Arch-angel, thy Harbinger, begin to look forth and thruſt his head out of the clouds: which makes my heart leap for joy; as if it would leave this world, and inſtantly go to meet thee, my infinitely Dearer Saviour.

For what ſplendor is there in Gold, that I ſhould deſire it? What brightneſs in pretious ſtones? What ornament in the moſt ſumptuous apparel, compared with that Good which our hope in thee ſuppoſes, and ſets before us? When thou who reigneſt over all creatures, ſhalt reveal thy ſelf to mankind, ſitting moſt magnificently upon a lofty Throne; when innumerable millions of Angels ſhall *Greg. Nyſſen. Orat. V. in Beatitud.*

ſhall be ſeen about thee; and when the Kingdom of Heaven, which now is ſuch a ſecret, ſhall be ſet wide open before all our eyes.

O let the thoughts of the Trump of God, which ſhall then ſound, awaken my ſoul more powerfully, to lift up it ſelf to look for thee; and for that glorious ſight, thou wilt bleſs us withal, at thy appearing! O let the faith that is in thy heart grow daily more active, and work in me a moſt vigorous love of thee! And let my love be inlarged, till this heart be ſtretched to its utmoſt capacity; and thou, the infinite Good, ſtill fill and overflow it. For I am afraid thou ſhouldeſt come and find me unprepared for thee. I would not for all the world be found unready to meet thee; and unfit for the bleſſings thou wilt bring along with thee.

If an heart that deſires thee moſt paſſionately be of any worth; if thou canſt have any kind thoughts of a mind that prefers thee and thy love, above all other things; if to love thine appearing, far more than the moſt glorious condition wherein a man can poſſibly appear in mortal fleſh, can find any

any grace in thine eyes; behold then a ſoul that is able to ſay, through thy great goodneſs, that it moſt earneſtly longs for thee. See here an heart that deſires to be like thee; that had rather dye than diſpleaſe thee: and that will welcome thy coming with more joy, than a ſick man, wearied with the reſtleſſneſs of a long night, doth the morning light; or a Traveller doth his much deſired home; or a Virgin eſpouſed doth her long abſent Bridegroom, the dearly beloved of her ſoul.

It is thou, who haſt begot in me theſe longings. I have received all thou ſeeſt in me from thy gracious hands; which have made me, and faſhioned me; and made me unſatisfied in any thing, but thee, and thy love. O let not theſe pious longings alſo be unſatisfied. Let me not want the pleaſures from which I have turned mine eyes away here; and thoſe pleaſures too, which I look for ſo earneſtly, and promiſe my ſelf at thine appearing.

But let the ſame reaſon which moved thee to give me ſo much, incline thee to give me more. Let that mighty love which hath wrought in me deſires, bring me to the enjoyment. And after thou haſt pleaſed thy bounty, in making me receive as much

as

as thou wilt in this present state; let it be thy pleasure to receive me to thee in a better: and by giving me all I would have, in the sight I expect of thee, to leave no desires remaining in me. Amen *and* Amen.

THE END.

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